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"A" Is For "Archive": A Case Study in the American Long Poem

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"A" Is For "Archive": A Case Study in the American Long Poem

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"A" Is For "Archive": A Case Study in the American Long Poem

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Long poems like Ezra Pound's *The Cantos*, William Carlos Williams's *Paterson*, and Louis Zukofsky's *"A"* collect and preserve cultural documents, much in the manner of archives. Long poems of the so-called "Pound tradition" are arrangements of discrete passages, including direct citations from sources such as letters, historical texts, and other often "non-poetic" documents. Acting as an archivist, the poet selects material for preservation. Critics have used various frames, notably the epic, the sequence, and the collection, to interpret twentieth-century long poems. Though similarities to archives have been noted, an archival frame has not been fully developed. This dissertation draws on the disciplinary practices of the archivists as well as critical imaginings of archives to develop a frame for interpreting long poems as archives. After establishing the parameters of the archival frame, the bulk of the dissertation concentrates on Zukofsky's archival tendencies. Zukofsky worked as an archivist for the Work Projects Administration's *Index of American Design* project, where he developed strategies for using an archive as a communicative form. He crafted and marketed his own literary

archive as a means of establishing a literary reputation and as an alternative means of publication. But not only did he develop pragmatic uses of archives, he also applied his understanding of archival principles to the construction of his long poem *"A"*. The difficulties of reading *"A"* parallel those of working the Zukofsky archive. Readers are overwhelmed with hermetic details, documents of personal and public incidents, and records that we are unable to relate readily to surrounding material. Reading *"A"* as an archive, we must respond to the documents that are the component parts of the poem, to each document's situated context, and to the relationships among the parts that make up Zukofsky's "poem of a life."

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Introduction

Framing the Long Poem

This dissertation is primarily an investigation into how one man recorded, interpreted, and organized his life. Louis Zukofsky used the means of the long poem, a genre with ancient origins that had been reinvigorated by the innovations of Ezra Pound and a few other poets, to construct an archive that documented his life. Reading certain long poems is like working an archive: readers are overwhelmed by a mass of primary documents, of personal incidents and historical events, that they are unable to fit into a pre-existing hierarchy of knowledge. But before entering into Zukofsky's complex work and precise methods, I would like to examine the assumptions we bring to the form of his major work, the long poem *"A"*.[1] How we understand the long poem as a form affects the interpretations we can make of any particular work in the genre. In this introduction, I will examine some critical frames through which long poem have been understood before mapping out my exploration of one complex and idiosyncratic specimen of that form through the frame of the archive.

In the twentieth-century, many American poets wrote long poems that embody a number of modes, from narratives, to related sequences of lyrics, to assemblies of cultural information. In fact, it seems every notable subset of twentieth-century American poetry produced poems of a large scale: from the canonical Modernists (*The Waste Land, The*

[1] The fact that Zukofsky's work is titled *"A"*, always including the quotation marks, requires some stylistic innovation. Because they are part of the title and do not necessarily represent quotation, I place other punctuation, namely commas and periods, outside of the quotation marks, in opposition to preferred American English style. For the individual movements which constitute the long poem, I follow Zukofsky's own practice—the non-italicized poem title followed by a dash and the movement number. While standard usage might suggest "'A'-1" or *"A"*-1, I follow Zukofsky in using the simpler "A"-1.

Cantos, *Paterson*, H.D.'s *Helen in Egypt*); to the non-canonical Objectivists (*"A"* and Charles Reznikoff's *Testimony*); to the Projectivists (Charles Olson's *Maximus Poems*, Ed Dorn's *Slinger,* and we might include Ronald Johnson's *ARK* and *Book of the Green Man* here as well); the Beats (*Howl* and Kenneth Rexroth's several book-length philosophical musings); formalists and neo-formalists (Anthony Hecht's *Vespers,* Vikram Seth's *Golden Gate*); and Language Poets (Ron Silliman's recently completed, loosely organized succession of books collectively known as *The Alphabet*, Lyn Hejinian's *My Life*). Even what Charles Bernstein dubbed the "Official Verse Culture" of contemporary mainstream poetry has, despite a general predilection toward briefer lyric modes, produced such long poems as James Merrill's *Changing Light at Sandover* and A.R. Ammons's *Garbage*. Faced with such a variety of works, it is doubtful that any single interpretative method could do justice to the breadth of the twentieth-century long poem. Rather, I will attempt to develop an interpretive frame suitable to the long poems of what Marjorie Perloff calls "the Pound tradition" (or the understanding of Modernism implied by Hugh Kenner's designation, "The Pound Era").

Although Pound's crackpot economics and blatant prejudices obscure his achievements to some degree, his influence on his contemporaries and many poets of subsequent generations was great. Perloff's division in *The Dance of the Intellect* of twentieth-century American poetry into two traditions—a school of Pound and one of Stevens—is perhaps too simple to fully map the variegated topography of the field, but it does help us locate certain tendencies associated with Pound's cohort and put them in opposition to the discursive elements of Stevens and his ilk. Stevensian poetry tends toward meditative interiority on a more personal scale, while the Poundian tends toward objective materiality, paratactic construction, and encompassing range (1-23). Poetry of this tradition should not be equated with lyrical meditation but with action: "The *how*, for

Poundians, thus becomes more interesting than the *what*: if poetry teaches us how to talk to ourselves, it is not because it provides us with a vision of Reality but because its processes imitate the processes of the external world as we have come to know it" (23). One especially well-put estimation of Pound's influence comes from one of his British disciples, Basil Bunting, co-dedicatee (with Zukofsky) of Pound's *Guide to Kulchur*. In his poem "On the Fly-Leaf of Pound's *Cantos*," Bunting compares *The Cantos* to the Alps, a massive natural formation beyond commentary ("What is there to say about them?").[2] In this poem, all modern poetry is subsidiary to Pound's, and to write poetry without taking his work into account would be, like discussing the long poem without engaging *The Cantos*, "to go a long way round" (114).

For Pound and his cohort, the long poem provided a vehicle to carry across and repurpose forgotten, neglected, or misinterpreted traditions to a new era. Margaret Dickie argues that such long poems trace a history from

> an iconoclastic and rebellious start in tense, complicated, and confused experimentation through a middle stage of exhaustion, accommodation, and revision, to a final acceptance of what the long poem had conserved and simultaneously, if paradoxically, to a longing for a conventional finish or coherence that had never been attempted…. [Modernism was] a movement of constant revisions in which the poets whose initial ambition had been to extend the resources of language found its limits and deepened the awareness of their own limits. (3-4)

Though she does not cite Pound's maxim "make it new" here, Dickie also understands Modernism, as carried out in the long poem, as a revisionary relation to the past. Many American Modernists used the long poem to contain and construct the past in order to

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[2] The complete text of Bunting's poem: "They are the Alps. What is there to say about them?/ They don't make sense./ Fatal glaciers, crags climb, / jumbled boulder and weed, pasture and boulder, scree,/ *et l'on entend,* maybe *le refrain joyeux et leger*. // There they are, you will have to go a long way round / if you want to avoid them. / It takes some getting used to. There are the Alps, / fools! Sit down and wait for them to crumble!" (114)

project, through the implied coherence of the long poem, a contemporary order (Dickie 148).

The precise nature of the long poem, as suggested by the casualness of the phrase itself, is difficult to specify. A "long poem" could be a poem that tells a long story, progresses through a large number of inter-related set pieces, or collects apparently unrelated fragments (to name only a few possibilities). Each of these interpretive models is a framework, in the sense defined by sociologist Erving Goff. Goff's book *Frame Analysis* proposes the existence of frameworks that provide context for a wide variety of phenomena, in essence defining reality for individuals:

> Some [frameworks] are neatly presentable as a system of entities, postulates, and rules; others—indeed most others—appear to have no apparent articulated shape, providing only a lore of understanding, an approach, a perspective. Whatever the degree of organization, however, each primary framework allows its user to locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms. (21)

Drawing on the work of William James and Gregory Bateson (among others), Goff presents numerous citations of "real life" situations, newspaper accounts, and excerpts from imaginative literature to show how individuals make sense of experience—how they answer the fundamental question "What is it that's going on here?" (8). Comparing any segment of experience to a governing framework provides the answer: if we understand that the framework of "theatre" is in play, we understand why two people on a stage are loudly discussing personal matters. Linguist George Lakoff applies the concept of frameworks to a specifically linguistic context. In his explorations of conceptual frames, he argues that certain central metaphors provide the frames that determine how people perceive and think about their world: "Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other

people" (3). Conceptual metaphors that he discusses in *Metaphors We Live By* structure our perceptions by acting as frameworks for how we interpret and talk about the world. He applies this idea to contemporary politics in analyzing the discourse of the Democratic and Republican parties. Republicans have developed what he calls a "strict father" framework. Standard Republican policies follow from this framing metaphor: The government is a strict father who requires obedience from his children (the people). Social programs are immoral, in this framework, because they give children rewards they do not deserve (*Don't Think* 6-9). Lakoff develops this frame to encompass all standard Republican positions, as well as proposing a "nurturant parent" model for Democrats to adopt (*Don't Think* 11). Such frame analyses are commonly applied in literary criticism: if a poem is thought of as a functioning machine, as in New Criticism, analyses focus on the relationships among working parts. If the same poem is thought to be an expression of cultural identity, other features come into focus. The primary frames I have found for interpreting the long poem are the epic, the sequence, and the collection.[3] Any such model makes assumptions about its subject, and these assumptions clarify or obscure certain qualities of the poems.

[3] In categorizing criticism in such a way, I am necessarily passing over other insightful criticisms. Margaret Dickie's study *On the Modernist Long Poem* is squarely focused on four major American Modernist long poems: *The Waste Land*, *The Bridge*, *The Cantos*, and *Paterson*. Eliot, Crane, Pound and Williams all "had been committed in the beginning to brevity, intensity imagistic precision, [and] rhythmical rigor" before undertaking their longer, more ambitious works (1-2). These poems are essentially nonnarrative, and so Dickie uses the narratives of their composing to supplement this lack: "Long in the time of composition, in the initial intention, and in the final form, the Modernist long poem is concerned first and last with its own length" (6). Brian McHale, working out of post-Modern theory and reading more recent long poems, sees both narrative (though Menippean satire rather than epic) and architecture (borrowing such notions as "legibility" and "double coding" from architectural theory) as competing models for the long poem (3-17). He explicitly refers to these frames as models: "[W]e always approach unknown objects in the light of known models. The question, then, is what models to substitute for the privileged high-modernist model" (3). McHale, fully vested in marking differences between variegated post-Modernism and monolithic Modernism, sees a single inflexible model of the high modernist exercising controlling and unifying power over a set of related images.

The epic is the oldest and most prevalent framework for interpreting long poems. In the Western tradition, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* served as the basis of education and as towering models and sources of inspiration for centuries: from Virgil and Dante to Joyce and Pound, ambitious writers have adopted the epic scale and adapted typical epic themes. It is no surprise then that readers and critics might approach a long poem with this frame in mind. It has, after all, a millennia-long tradition. To Aristotle, the epic was defined by a few simple characteristics. An epic is a narrative in verse, not limited in length because, unlike tragedy, "epic action has no limits of time" (52). Despite the centrality of epic to ancient culture, few surviving sources say much more about it. During the Renaissance, Torquato Tasso and other writers anointed epic the favored form of verse for its evocation of noble action and distinguished achievement. Tasso argues that epic subject matter should be taken from history. Setting historical subject matter into the epic form disrupts the flow of time, by joining a story *in media res*, as Homer did, and moving backward and foreward in this narrative at will (Tesky). To think of a long poem as an epic is to invoke a conceptual framework that encourages certain types of readings. Such readers would be sensitive to such generic commonplaces as those identified in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, which defines "epic" as a "long narrative poem that treats a single heroic figure or group of such figures and concerns an historical event, such as a war or conquest, or an heroic quest of some other significant mythic or legendary achievement that is central to the traditions and belief of its culture" (361). I cite this standard reference work simply to establish a broad understanding of the poetic form. There are of course more nuanced modern studies of the traditional epic, such as Mikhail Bakhtin's "Epic and the Novel," which finds in epic's narration of a national past statements about the present and likewise finds in the nature of the hero statements about the audience's values (843-844). Eric Havelock's *The*

Muse Learns to Write traces the oral roots of epic, and describes Homeric poems as storehouses of useful information (55). Michael Andre Bernstein, Joseph Conte, and Norman Wacker have all adapted historical understandings of the epic to the activities of the Modernist long poem. Conte reads twentieth-century long poems such as *The Cantos* and *"A"* in the mode of epics insofar as that they "posit an authoritarian hierarchy" on the world (36), while Wacker probes Pound's rewriting of the past through Bakhtin's dialogic theory. (I will elaborate on Bernstein below.) Reading a long poem with such prevailing concepts of the epic in mind leads readers to seek such phenomena as a narrative with a hero, a war and/or a quest, and the didactic expression of some cultural ethos. Operating within this frame, the absence of any of these elements becomes noteworthy, and we might lack the inclination to discuss the presence of other, non-epic, elements.

Long poems are still sometimes thought of as epics, though many critics have also come to view the modern long poem in terms of sequence or collection, techniques which defy the norms of the traditional epic. But surely it would be absurd to deny that Pound's *Cantos*, for instance, is in "dialogical relationship… to the epic tradition" (Wacker 131). After all, Pound does begin his long poem with a retelling of Book XI of *The Odyssey,* and Odysseus returns throughout as an emblem of Pound's ideal "hero of directed will" (see Davenport 87ff). Furthermore, Pound continually referred to his poem as an epic, as when famously proclaiming that "an epic is a poem including history" (*Make It New* 86). He also actively cultivated what Jeffrey Walker identifies as "bardic ethos"—the projection of a confidently informed, expansive identity—inherited from the ancient epic tradition and made new by Modernism. So it is no wonder that adopting the epic frame has been common among Pound critics. The most pronounced recourse to the epic frame is found in Michael Andre Bernstein's valuable study *The Tale of the Tribe: Ezra Pound*

and the Modern Verse Epic. Bernstein acknowledges that his term "verse epic" has implications that the "more modest" term "long poem" does not, and uses those implications to recognize important facets of Pound's (and Williams's and Olson's) work (11). He proposes a four-part provisional definition of the "modern verse epic":

> (a)The epic presents a narrative of its audience's own cultural, historical, or mythic heritage, providing models of exemplary conduct (both good and bad) by which its readers can regulate their lives and adjust their shared customs.
>
> (b) The dominant voice narrating the poem will, therefore, not bear the trace of a single sensibility; instead, it will function as a spokesman for values generally acknowledged as significant for communal stability and social well-being…
>
> (c) Consequently, the proper audience of an epic is not the individual in his absolute inwardness but the citizen as participant in a collective linguistic and social nexus. Whereas a lyric is addressed to the purely private consciousness of its hearer…the epic speaks primarily to members of a "tribe"…
>
> (d) The element of instruction… is deliberately foregrounded in an epic which offers its audience lessons presumed necessary to their individual and social survival. (14)

Bernstein's provisional definition finds in epic an orientation that the category "long poem," in his view, lacks (15). But what he admits is an "uneasy mix of *a priori* criteria and *a postiori* features" seems specifically geared to describe *The Cantos* (Bernstein 14n). He finds in *The Cantos* a framework for interpreting it, which he also applies to the long poems of Williams and Olson.

Dickie summarily dismisses Bernstein's use of the epic model:

> For the American Modernists, the long poem provided unusual hazards to extended composition because it had no principle of generation, no limits to reach or transgress, no narrative to tell, no hero to tell it. More than that, as Pound notes, there was between the poet and his audience neither a common language nor assumed answers. (15)

Dickie not only criticizes Bernstein for what he leaves out of his definition of epic (formal conventions, single hero, unity of plot), but challenges what he did include—the

notion of a common language for communicating between poet and reader (though she does concede at least one legitimate connection between epic and long poem: both are a public poetry rife with "celebrations of the city, models for good government, values and visions by which to live" (8)). Dickie reasons that because the work of Pound, Eliot, Crane, and Williams is in each case *sui generis*, no outside frame of reference is suitable but for the process of composition itself. To Dickie, each long poem is best read in the context of the struggle of the poet to complete it (a struggle which most poets did not win, since most of the major Modernist long poems are unfinished). In effect, Dickie imposes the heroic narrative of composition over any epic narrative the poem might have.

An alternative means of framing the long poem is as a sequence of shorter lyrical units. This model sees the long poem as a progression of discrete parts put in motion by some specific motive (such as grief over the death of a friend) or set of rules (such as those based on linguistic relationships or numerical progression). In *The Modern Poetic Sequence*, M.L. Rosenthal and Sally Gall maintain that while the scope of modern long poems such as *The Maximus Poems* and *The Bridge* may evoke epic through the "haunting sense of a world of buried memory" (271), the concept of sequence better describes them. They believe they have solved Edgar Allan Poe's paradox of the impossibility of the long poem by identifying poetic sequences which depend "*neither on continuous narration nor on developed argument but on a progression of specific qualities and intensities of emotionally and sensuously charged awareness.* A successful long poem, and the modern sequence pre-eminently, is made up of such centers of intensity" (6, emphasis in original). In other words, Rosenthal and Gall see the long poem as a montage of lyric poems. They have in fact have adopted Poe's very reason that "a long poem does not exist" (575) and use it as the definition of "the modern poetic sequence." When Poe claims that "the phrase, *a long poem*, is simply a flat contradiction

in terms," he speaks from a conception of poetry as conventionally lyric, a form that privileges the revelatory moment that "excites" and "elevates the soul" over experience unfolding over a span of time.[4] So-called "long poems" therefore are nothing but sequences of lyric moments interspersed with dull passages. According to Dickie, the frame of poetic sequence fails because it "obfuscates more than it clarifies, since *sequence* suggests an order of development nowhere evident in these poems' compositions"(6). Dickie here returns to her personal framing of long poems as narratives of their own composition. Joseph Conte likewise criticizes the inability of Rosenthal and Gall's model to make distinctions (27). The sequence model does not admit the significance of scale or unity of purpose, and so does not differentiate between a book of related lyrics by Robert Lowell and a singular project like *The Cantos*. For my own part, a sequence may be a useful framework for discussing longer poems of the Stevensian school that invite meditation through lyrical passages, but is less useful for the Pound tradition that is more interested in building larger structures out of discrete building blocks.

The third frame I will examine is currently more diffuse and harder to place than epic or lyric sequence. What I call the collection frame is implicit in such models as Conte's serial form and Balachandra Rajan's unfinished form. Conte develops a sophisticated typology for the twentieth-century long poem, which includes the epic ("the classic type and model for the long form in poetry"(36)) and sequence but adds two emerging practices, proceduralism and seriality. The procedural poem might be classified as a subspecies of sequence, since such poems derive from some initiatory rule set. The series is a form that collects disparate materials, and so I would classify as a

[4] For an extended discussion of the lyric form's concentration on moments in time, see Sharon Cameron's *Lyric Time*.

manifestation of the collection frame. In Conte's view, it emerged out of Modernism as a type of long poem which opposes the "epic goal" of "encompassment, summation; in contrast, the serial process is accumulation" (37). Following the traditional notion of Modernism passing to Post-Modernism in the 1950's, Conte identifies the arrival of serial poems that "share the [Post-Modern] properties of a work without bounds: having no beginning and no end; a limitless interrelation of parts; the absence of an externally imposed schema; mobility; and an intentionally incomplete condition of form" (49). Though he applies this precise description to such later poems as Robert Duncan's *Passages*, it also suggests qualities of *"A"* and *The Cantos*, poems that Conte consigns to the category of epic.

In the absence of "an externally exposed schema," the poem demands that the reader do the work of putting discrete parts into relationship with one another. Long poems since Modernism tend to be disjunctive: where a classical epic's digressions would tie back into a heroic narrative, the discrete parts of the long poem tend to have more oblique relationships.[5] Conte differentiates between the ordered sequence and the disjunctive series in grammatical terms: "A sequence is a hypotactic structure (meaning, 'arranged one under another') whose elements are subordinate to or dependent on other elements for their meaning…. The series, however, is a paratactic structure (meaning 'arranged side by side') whose elements, although related by the fact of their contiguity, are nevertheless autonomous" (22). This difference provides the boundary between the sequence, an organic "lyric structure" (Rosenthal and Gall 11) and what I call the collection frame. A sequence includes a hypotactic order for the reader to follow, but a collection requires the reader to discover connections across a paratactic field.

[5] In coining the phrase "disjunctive poetics" Peter Quartermain does not refer exclusively to long poems, but to work of varying scales, from Zukofsky's "*A*" to his *Anew* 12, a twenty-four-line poem.

The collection frame bears surface similarities to the sequence frame in that it unites shorter units under a single rubric. However, the collection frame is not vested in the lyric tradition any more than the epic tradition. In a veiled response to Poe's essay "The Principles of Composition," Pound adds a note to his essay on Vorticism that subtly invokes this third frame: "I am often asked whether there can be a long imagiste or voriticist poem. The Japanese, who evolved the hokku, evolved also the Noh plays. In the best 'Noh' the whole play may consist of one image. I mean it is gathered about one image. Its unity consists in one image, enforced by movement and music. I see nothing against a long vorticist poem" (94). This comment relies on a special understanding of "image" as "a radiant node of cluster…through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing" (92). Pound conceived of "Imagisme" as a "department of poetry" distinct from lyric, epic and didactic traditions (82-83). Pound's "tenets of the Imagiste faith" (83) are well-known at this point (see his brief "A Few Don'ts" in *Literary Essays* (4)), but the salient point to our discussion is that an image is a construction that collects and contains a number (possibly a very large number) of constituent elements.[6]

The purpose of collecting seems to be accumulation, yet completion or coherence is apparently not only unobtainable but undesirable. In *The Form of the Unfinished*, Balachandra Rajan explores the tradition of unfinished (as opposed to simply incomplete) long poems. Such unfinished poems as *The Faerie Queene, Don Juan,* and *The Cantos* contain forces that resist closure in a variety of ways: digression, deferral, fragmentation, irresolvable contradiction. An unfinished poem "surrounds itself with promises of pattern which it does not renounce but also does not fulfill" (271). The unfinished state is in itself an aesthetic fulfillment: "A poem that is *properly unfinished* should be less

[6] For a lengthy explanation of Pound's understanding of the ideogram and its relationship to his concept of the vortex, see Kenner 145-162, 232-247

satisfactory if we were to pursue any of the conceivable ways of finishing it... we should regard any prospective closure of it as an imminent admission of its failure" (5, emphasis added). When a collection is "properly unfinished" in its nature it resists closure, exalts its own process of composition, and invites a range of interpretations (see Rajan 280-281).

Through a fragmentary progress of restarting, shifting scenes, and continual quotation, Pound provides "the reader with a sufficient (and craftily selected) 'phalanx' of historical, literary, and economic 'particulars' to compile an intellectual as well as aesthetic agreement" (Bernstein 30). These particulars constitute the collection, and the poet's work is largely the selection of what to include. Pound's method is less to narrate history than to compile historical materials. Rajan describes Pound's method as "minimizing… management":

> To manage is to petrify, to arrange the giveness of things within the matrix of an interpretation. The author's guidance must therefore be erased from the poem... The facts must be allowed to speak for themselves, to establish their true politics in carefully silent exchanges with each other which the reader must learn to hear and to remember. "All knowledge" Pound tells us "is built up from a rain of factual atoms." (274)

Bernstein tells us that Pound "neither proposes an explicit historical thesis, nor states a formal series of conclusions" (39). Rather, he compiles a storehouse of fragments that require the reader to fill in gaps, make identifications, and fashion arguments.

Just as Conte's series and Rajan's unfinished form invoke the collection framework, so does the conceptual understanding I will argue in this dissertation: that the long poem is an archive. The framework of archives offers a specific but flexible set of concepts to work with. Much in the manner of archives, long poems like *The Cantos*, *Paterson*, and *"A"* collect and preserve cultural documents. Each of these long poems is an arrangement of discrete passages, often direct citations from sources such as letters,

historical texts, and other often "non-poetic" documents. Acting as an archivist, the poet selects material for preservation. Having surveyed some of the possible frames for reading the long poem, I will develop this single frame based on the principles of the archive and use it to read Louis Zukofsky's *"A"*. *"A"* is a multi-varied structure that at once invokes and resists many interpretive frames. In his unpublished talk at the Zukofsky Centennial conference, Peter Quartermain goes so far as to claim that it resists "the hierarchy of interpretation" altogether. But this perplexing variety suggests the archive in itself: an archival collection is able to accommodate disparate materials, so long as they are produced by or passed into the possession of the originating body. The difficulties of reading *"A"* parallel those of working the Zukofsky archive. Readers are overwhelmed with hermetic details, documents of personal and public incidents, and records that we are unable to relate readily to surrounding material. Reading *"A"* as an archive, we must respond to the "documents" that are the component parts of the poem, to each document's situated context, and to the relationships among the parts that make up Zukofsky's "poem of a life."

My first chapter, "Poems Containing History: The Long Poem as Archive," describes this archival frame in detail, drawing on the disciplinary practices of the archivists as well as critical imaginings of the archive. Archives embody what historian Steven Conn calls an "object-based epistemology" that links the assembling of objects into an archive with the creation of knowledge. Such an understanding of knowledge requires active participation among the users of the collection, or readers of the work. Select long poems, specifically those related to the Pound tradition, embody this epistemology and invite such a role for the reader. As case in point, Pound's own Malatesta Cantos not only resemble an archive in its arrangement of historical documents, but they also venerate an archivist, praise a physical archive, and incorporate

materials from existing archives. By employing techniques of the archivist, including direct citation, careful attribution, and paratactic arrangement of documents, Pound enforces a "law of the archive," which venerates certain sources and arranges them in a way to control their interpretation. Other poets, notably Williams and Charles Reznikoff, employ similar techniques, though to different ends. The most elaborate statement of archival poetics is made by Charles Olson, the prominent early inheritor of the Pound tradition, in his "Bibliography on America for Ed Dorn."

Having established the parameters of the archive frame, I turn for the rest of the dissertation to an extended examination of Zukofsky's archiving, both in *"A"* and in other activities. Chapter Two, "'Historic and Contemporary Particulars': Zukofsky the Archivist," examines some of his more traditional archiving, beginning with his professional work as an archivist on the Work Projects Administration's *Index of American Design*. The writings he produced for this project reveal a strong belief in an object-based epistemology, allowing craft objects to tell stories in various arrangements. He also applied the archival training he received in the 1930s to his teaching. He began working on his poetry anthology *A Test of Poetry* at the same time as he worked for the Index project. Although any anthology is in some sense an archive of valued poems, *A Test* is particularly committed to making statements about poetry through its manner of arrangement. Readers are encouraged to fashion their own judgments about the included poems, although the unusual display-style grouping implies certain interpretations. This chapter ends with an examination of a "visual archive" he created for a class he taught at Brooklyn Polytechnic. His use of photographic reproductions of art works shows his preference for the communicative powers of objects as opposed to didactic presentation of the synthesized lecture.

Zukofsky provides an exemplary case study for the archival long poem, not only for the matter and arrangement of his poem *"A"*, but for the peculiar nature of his actual literary archive. The Zukofsky archive at the University of Texas at Austin's Harry Ransom Center is not only an illuminating source for studying Zukofsky's difficult work, but a frame for interpreting it. The fact that Zukofsky selected and annotated the documents comprising his archive suggests that his practice as poet is continuous with his practice as self-archivist. Chapter Three, "The Archive at Work," shows how even a seemingly solitary writer like Zukofsky becomes invested in literary institutions such as publishing, academic discourse, and archives. This institutional approach traces the trajectory of Zukofsky's career, from modest promise to virtual invisibility to belated, largely posthumous, recognition. For years, Zukofsky was only known through his association with his older contemporaries, but he used this association to his advantage. In 1961, he began to dispatch his personal archive, including coveted correspondence from Pound and Williams, to the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas in exchange for the publication of his critical project *Bottom: On Shakespeare*. Following the founding and cataloging of the Zukofsky archive, the reading, publication, and scholarship of Zukofsky gained a new life. After a paradigmatic outsider's career seemed to suggest a fruitless relationship to literary institutions, he was ultimately able to insinuate his work into the fabric of the academy.

Chapter Four, *"A"* is for 'Archive,'" extends the archival framework explored in Chapter One to examine *"A"*. As the predetermined, twenty-four-movement structure of *"A"* unfolded and modified itself over the 50 years of its composition, playful uses of language became increasingly pronounced, obscuring the documentary nature of incorporated elements and accentuating musical properties. However, by incorporating the archival principle of provenance, we can see that Zukofsky's poetic practice is fully

consonant with the self-archivist. As the Zukofsky archive demonstrates, an archive is simply the store of documents accumulated by a specific individual or organization. *"A"*, in effect a twenty-four-room archive, was slowly filled with records of the Zukofskys' quotidian life, of his reading (often masked in dense punning), and of the newspaper reports that passed into his possession. This chapter traces the evolution of the poem from the obvious arrangements of source materials in the first half of *"A"* to the more subtle, often unnoted use of materials in the later movements.

Like the preceding chapters, Chapter Five, "'The Hidden Foci of Production' in 'A'-9," relies on the unique holdings of the Zukofsky archive. The archive houses numerous versions of "A"-9, the pivotal movement of Zukofsky's poem which marks the transition from Marxist materialist cultural analysis to a celebration of private, familial love. This shift parallels the shift in archiving source material. Each version of this movement, from the self-published *First Half of "A"-9*, to completed versions incorporated into editions of *"A" 1-12*, to a broadside version, share identical language but occur in radically different editions. The archive is a privileged site of reading because it allows the reader to examine multiple versions of a text, including manuscripts and source materials. Each published edition of "A"-9 uses bibliographic signifiers to imply a relationship of the author to his continuing work, using the trope of halfness approaching completion to show that *"A"* is not determined by narrative thrust but teleology. It is a capacious structure intended to record a twentieth-century life. It is, in other words, an archive.

Chapter 1

Poems Containing History: The Long Poem as Archive

Later in his life, Ezra Pound modified his famous description of *The Cantos* as a "poem *including* history" (*Make It New* 86, emphasis added) to "a poem *containing* history" (Hall, emphasis added). After uttering the latter description in his 1963 *Paris Review* interview with Donald Hall, Pound clarified himself, saying that "the modern mind contains heteroclite elements. The past epos has succeeded when all or a great many of the answers were assumed, at least between author and audience, or a great mass of audience. The attempt in an experimental age is therefore rash" (Hall). To say that his long poem "includes" history is, it seems, misleading. *The Cantos* does not include an agreed upon history so much as contain the documents from which histories might be written, much like an archive. The work of interpreting these documents is shifted to the reader. Since authoritative "answers" are no longer "assumed," Pound frames his long poem as a vast collection, able to assimilate a large number and variety of textual objects. Pound's practice emphasizes collecting and arranging these "heteroclite elements" in a sort of archive. There is an identifiable tendency among a small group of long poems, by Pound, William Carlos Williams, and a few others, to collect and preserve—that is, to *contain*—cultural information. Pound's famous motto, "make it new," implies that the nature of this carrying over of key cultural material from the past is in essence an archival mission. Far from a rallying cry for pure novelty, to "make it new" requires that there be some "it" to be carried over the gap between old and new. Kurt Heinzelman analyzes Pound's motto in the context of archives:

> [T]he "it" in the phrase "make it new" may be understood to constitute a hitherto uncatalogued archive of past poetic practices, and the "making" is an act of

> archival retrieval and arranging. Ultimately, Pound's phrase "make it new" does not mean "make it new once and for all" but rather, "find out what is new about the old, and do so again and again." Pound's sense of "the new" is that it is an archive which is not exhausted by being boxed and sorted, not depleted by being used and exhibited. (133)

For Pound, the long poem was the primary engine for "making it new" precisely because it functions as an archive.

Leafing through *The Cantos*, one sees the result of years of research incorporated into the work. This research is usually presented as direct citation and without connecting commentary, as though discrete sections were original documents preserved in an archive. This resemblance to archives is pronounced in but not limited to *The Cantos;* many other American long poems, including *Paterson, The Maximus Poems*, and *"A"* are likewise carefully crafted collections of source material. In fact, this resemblance has led to some long poems becoming a sort of institution in themselves: hosts of critics have assembled to dig into the poets' archives to identify sources, sort out interpolations, map correspondences, and so on. But as valuable as this exegesis is, we might also analyze implications of the archive frame, as invoked by several long poems. "Archive" is a multivalent concept, but I will concentrate on how the long poem uses the techniques of the archive to structure information. By examining a few long poems through the frame of the archive, we can form a more accurate image of the work of the poets, who, like archivists, act as cultural custodians, selecting records for preservation. These poems make demands on the reader that might be likened to the demands of archival research: one must discover and construct meaning out of an assemblage of documents.

Before examining the archival frame in several long poems, I will address that slippery concept, the archive.[7] The word "archive" evokes a number of tensions: it might

[7] The larger group "cultural repository" includes the library, the museum, and the archive. "Archive" is the dominant term in this family, often referring to any type of cultural repository, though it also refers to a

be a noun or verb; it might imply public or private; it might refer to a building or a collection housed within that structure. To archive a document is to place it in an archive, which may refer to a building where records are kept or to a collection of records within such a building. Archiving a document at once preserves it for public memory and sequesters it from public access; archives are by nature both open and restricted because, even if the archiving institution is generally open to the public, use of an archival collection may be controlled by the institution or possibly other parties (such as, in case of literary archives, an author or author's estate). Further tension can be seen in the writing about archives, which tends to divide between practicing archivists and critical theorists. Archivists from pioneers such as Hilary Jenkinson and T.R. Schellenburg to, more recently, Sarah Tyacke and Terry Cook, tend to write on issues such as the provenance of documents and the organization of collections, while critics of a more literary or theoretical bent have been interested in the political and epistemological implications of archives. Critical theories of archives depend less on the organizing principles used by archivists than on the imaginative value of archives themselves. For instance, Michel Foucault uses the word to describe an invisible body of laws, while Jacques Derrida conceives of "archive" as a counterpart for discourse in general, which operates as a means of inscription and supplement to memory. Literary critics such as Thomas Richards and Michael O'Driscoll investigate the ideological implications of archives as structures and institutions. These institutional implications then might readily be transferred to the long poem as a form (as O'Driscoll does with *The Cantos*). Given this widely varied body of writing on archives, one might surmise that the concept is too amorphous to ground a steady interpretive method for the long poem, but richness of the

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specific type. I will make clear through context whether I mean archives in general (i.e., including libraries and museums) or archives as such.

form interacts with a range of archival theories. Most literary criticism that has evoked the notion of the archive has focused on the political implications of the form. However, I seek to describe an interpretive model deriving from the professional discourse of archivists, to reveal how this manner of describing and working with archives can be adapted to critical readings of the long poems of the Pound tradition. I wish to focus on how archives and long poems similarly function as means for managing information. After examining those practices which archivists and poets share, I will then gauge the critical valence of the term "archive" for literary critics and critical theorists. The broad claims of Foucault and Derrida often take little account of the actual workings of archives, though their ideas have been integrated into current archival theory.

The earliest archives in the Western world may have been housed in the Athenian Metroon, a temple founded in the fourth or fifth century B.C. In the Metroon, Athenians deposited their legal documents, treaties, records of assembly meetings, lists of Olympic champions, and manuscripts of plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides (Schellenberg, *Modern Archives* 3). However, the codification of archival principles is a relatively new phenomenon. In this section I will lay out the basic principles of modern archiving, as developed in Dutch, British, and American manuals written in the first half of the twentieth century. My primary sources are as follows: *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, compiled by the Dutch archivists S. Muller, J.A. Feith, and R. Fruin in 1898; two editions of the *British Manual of Archive Administration*, published in 1922 and 1937, by Sir Hilary Jenkinson; and two books by the American archivist T.R. Schellenberg: *Modern Archives* (1956) and *The Management of Archives* (1965). These books are cited in such contemporary handbooks as Kathleen D. Roe's *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* and James M. O'Toole and Richard J. Cox's *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts*. Though contemporary sources take issue with

some of their predecessors' finer points, these earlier handbooks clearly provide the basis of current archival practice. Muller, et. al.'s manual was not translated into English until 1940, so Jenkinson's books disseminated the core ideas about archives to the English-speaking world. A close examination of Jenkinson's *Manual* (written, incidentally, in graceful and lucid prose) shows that the archive is a form that responds to the fragmentation of modern life, yet incorporates that fragmentation as a distinguishing feature. Jenkinson's preface to the second edition notes that "the appreciation of the value of Archives, and organized effort for their better control and maintenance, have increased to an unparalleled extent both in Europe and America" in the years following World War I (xii). The War experience made clear that

> the enormous stock of fresh experience which has been accumulated during the War and which will be material for the work of the future historian, not to mention students in other branches of learning, is hidden in a mass of documents so colossal that the question of their housing alone… presents quite novel features… [I]t is largely the addition of this abnormal mass of new Archive matter to our existing collections which compels us to face the fact that we must make at any rate a beginning to settling our Archive problems, old and new, if we are to deal satisfactorily with the present and safeguard the future of research work. (20)

Schellenberg's books concentrate the problems of modern archives, including the overwhelming amount of documents produced by modern organizations, the greater complexity of these documents (arising from specialization), and the lack of uniform systems of record keeping (35-37). Schellenberg describes several other "modern" characteristics of archives, including an indeterminacy of what an archive might include, variety of arrangement, uniqueness, a high degree of selectivity (114) which are still being argued in contemporary discourse. Although active debate over such issues as the arrangement, preservation, and destruction of documents continues to this day in such journals as *Archivaria* and *American Archivist*, I limit my scope to an earlier time frame for three reasons. First, it was in this period that the basic concepts of the archive were

articulated. Secondly, this period roughly corresponds with the rise of what I characterize as the archival long poem, so the cross-reference to contemporaneous archival theory is relevant. Finally, later developments in archive construction and management are to a great extent the result of technological changes that occurred after the careers of the main poets I am examining.

The first modern handbook for archivists, the Dutch *Manual*, is, according to its authors, "a tedious and meticulous book" (9). The first thirty pages parse the definition of archives, which was formulated by the Dutch Association of Archivists as the "whole of written documents, drawings and printed materials officially received or produced by an administrative body … insofar as these documents were intended to remain in the custody of that body" (13). A set of documents produced by a single body constitutes an archival collection. Subsequent writers, notably Jenkinson, recognized personal archives (insofar as they are "collections made by private or semi-private bodies or persons, acting in their official or business capacities" (8)) and more diverse types of documents. Archival theory treats "the document" as a precise and essential concept. Jenkinson defines documents as

> all manuscript in whatever materials made, all script produced by writing machines, and all script mechanically reproduced… adding to these all other material evidences, whether or no they include alphabetical or numerical signs, which form part of or are annexed to, or may be reasonably assume to have formed part of or been annexed to, specific documents thus defined. (6-7)

A standard principle of archivists is that documents possess not only "informational value" but also "evidential value" (these values being of course apart from any monetary value the documents might posses). "Informational value" might be characterized as the content of a document: the price of tea in China in 1849, say. The "evidential value" indicates how the originating body functioned: the bookkeeping practices of tea importers in 1849, for example. While the informational value of a document would likely be clear

from the time of its creation, the evidential value changes with context. For this reason, the provenance, or line of ownership, of documents becomes important. Jenkinson in particular argues for the importance of validating a line of possession for any document, but almost all archivists testify to the importance of preserving original documents, rather than simply transcribing the information they contain.

The unique organizational features of archives derive from this double value of documents. Muller et. al.'s handbook claims that any archive is a "living organism," composed of documents arranged in an order that reflects how the originating body functioned. Archival documents have meaning insofar as the "various documents of an archival collection throw light upon one another" (36). Because every archive-producing entity is unique, no archive can be forced into an existing system like the Dewey decimal system or Library of Congress call numbers. Rather, archival classifications should be tailored to specific circumstances, to be simple, flexible, and expansible. General principles for classifying archives should follow a few goals: to accurately reflect the action which produced a document, to follow the organization of the producing organization, and only then to reflect the subject matter of specific documents (Mueller, *et al*. 53-56).

Since the word "archive" is sometimes used to refer not only to documentary archives such as those discussed by Jenkinson et al. but also to museums and libraries, it might be reasonable to suspect that all these cultural repositories share similar principles of collection and preservation. Libraries and museums may house archives, and indeed may be considered archives in certain contexts. Some critical theorists see these institutions as identical and use "archive" to refer to them all, but many practicing archivists maintain distinctions between archives and similar institutions. Archivist Sarah Tyacke characterizes the professional position: "the originating context or provenance of

the Archive's creation gives it its characteristics and purpose, where the collecting activity defines the library or museum" (5). Schellenberg elaborates on the difference between collecting and receiving institutions and describes the resulting differences in method. The librarian deals with individual publications, while the archivist deals with collections of various records:

> He [the archivist] does not take an individual item, such as a letter, a report, or some other document, and say that it has value. He judges the value of the item in relation to other items, that is, in relation to the entire documentation of the activity that resulted in its production. He, therefore, normally selects records for the preservation in the aggregate, not as single items; and he selects them in relation to function and organization rather than subject. His effort is to preserve evidence on how organic bodies functioned. (21)

In this passage, Schellenberg prizes evidential value. Librarians and archivists both maintain and classify collections, but while librarians arrange discrete materials according to some classification system based on informational value (such as the Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress cataloguing systems), archivists do not. In "removing items from their (shared) context," much of the said items' evidential value would be destroyed (Schellenberg 21). Archivists may describe, catalogue, and index their collections for easier access, but their methods must retain the coherence of the original context.[8] Critical theorists tend to blur these categories, even though professional discourse defines them clearly.

Although archives can be differentiated from libraries or museums, all three institutions share what historian Steven Conn calls an "object-based epistemology." Conn's research analyzes museum displays of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America and finds in them "the last great encyclopedic project, undertaken at a

[8] Museums also are commonly grouped with archives, and also perform similar functions. But the curator of an exhibit arranges materials not according to a classification system nor to preserve the original context of the materials, but according to an exhibit's goals or theme. Catherine Paul, in *Poetry in the Museums of Modernism*, argues that some modern poets, including Pound, Yeats, and Marianne Moore, borrow arranging concepts from curatorial practice.

moment when many believed that objects, systematically arranged, could make perfect sense of the world" (31). The museum has the ability to reproduce the world by arranging objects in ways that an untrained observer could easily interpret. In such arrangements, objects are "not precisely transparent, but neither are they hopelessly opaque" (4). Meaning can be abstracted directly from the objects through careful observation. In this manner, Conn argues, knowledge was advanced in museums during the nineteenth century. For example, the great natural history museums linked "the collection of specimens in the field with the study, preservation, and arrangement of specimens by natural historians" (33). The form of museums promoted specific interpretations: in the nineteenth century, museum visitors generally proceeded through displays in a proscribed order, from entrance to exit, and even to this day objects are displayed in fixed positions. However, these arrangements are alterable. The knowledge projected by a set of objects can be "rearranged and reordered, understood and presented in any of a dozen different ways" (12).

Conn defines "objects" in a typical sense: tangible items ranging from biological specimens to works of art. It might therefore seem that the object-based epistemology is specific to the museum displays, and in fact quite opposed to the archives of documents on which much knowledge of the world is based. But archivists, in their veneration of the evidential value of original documents, treat documents as objects. As the knowledge-seeker collects objects and arranges them into meaningful patterns, he or she is constructing knowledge, whether these objects are textual or otherwise. The components of an object-based epistemology as embodied by an institution like a museum or archive are two-fold: the objects (natural or man-made) themselves and the system by which they

are arranged (22).[9] An object-based epistemology is implied by the paratactic arrangement of documents shared by the archivist-poets Pound ("a phalanx of particulars") and Williams ("no ideas but in things"), not to mention the "Objectivist" Louis Zukofsky ("thinking with things as they exist").

The practices of the archivist might therefore be extended to describe the practices of these poets. A poet might collect documents from the vast archive of human history and knowledge and arrange them into meaningful collections that not only convey information in themselves but also, in the aggregate, supply evidence of how a culture functions. The "documents" of a modern long poem therefore not only have meaning in the semantic features of their citations, but in the light they throw on one another. This sort of evidential value must be sorted out by the reader, who does the work of a researcher in the textual archive of a long poem.

The most prominent critical theorists to engage "the archive" as a concept are Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. I place "the archive" in quotation marks here to signify that the thinking of these prominent post-structuralists and the "theories and counter theories" that they have inspired (Manoff 19) adopt "the archive" as a concept that at times exceeds not only the categorical divisions between library and archive I describe above, but any sense of an archive as a tangible collection of things.[10] Nevertheless, their work has inspired a large body of archival theory, even influencing

[9] Conn further refines his description of these components of an object-based epistemology by employing Roman Jakobson's linguistic distinction between metonymy and synecdoche. In this view, an object metonymically substitutes for an entire category (a rock for all rocks) while the systematic arrangement of rocks evokes synecdoche in showing relationships among the objects. Using this framework, Conn argues that a museum display acts as a sort of statement, a sentence, about its subject (23).

[10] The librarian Marlene Manoff describes the influence of Derrida and Foucault in this way: "Even those who are not sympathetic to the archival theories of Derrida and Foucault might acknowledge that their work has inspired and authorized a huge body of archival discourse that follows and cites them. Their work has spawned theories and counter theories of the archive; it has pointed the way toward adopting archival theory as a way to explore a variety of problems and issues in contemporary scholarship; and it has contributed to explorations of the function of the archive in both democratic and totalitarian societies" (19).

practicing archivists. Furthermore, these critical re-conceptions of archives can shed light on the archival features of long poems. Although the theories of Foucault and Derrida tend to obscure the disciplinary practices of archivists, they do provide the means of identifying the implications of constructing and maintaining archives.

Though only discussed in detail in a single chapter, "the archive" is key to the argument of Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*, and indeed to Foucault's thought as a whole. Foucault's "archive" provides the basis of "the conceptual field" of a "discursive formation" (126). In other words, it is the body of unspoken laws that authorize the arguments and procedures of academic disciplines, political debates, or any other intellectual framework. Foucault famously defines the archive as "the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events" (129). Though he does not employ the metaphor, Foucault in effect proposes an invisible national archive of secret laws that somehow shapes the speech and beliefs of citizens. The archive is the unseen, unknown scaffolding that underwrites any utterance or any state of affairs. It gives shape to discourse so that "all these things said do not accumulate endlessly in an amorphous mass, nor are they inscribed in an unbroken linearity, nor do they disappear at the mercy of chance external accidents, but they are grouped together in distinct figures, composed together in accordance with specific regularities" (129). Like a literal archive, Foucault's is an arrangement that reflects the way a body functions, but the body in question is not a business or government but social formations. Nevertheless, Foucault clearly does not mean any form of traditional archive. To him, "archive"

> does not mean the sum of all the texts that a culture has kept upon its person as documents attesting to its own past, or as evidence of a continuing identity; nor do I mean the institutions, which in a given society, make it possible to record and preserve those discourses that one wishes to remember and keep in circulation. (128-129)

Foucault does not ascribe traditional functions to his archive: it does not "safeguard" or "collect the dust of statements" or unify "everything that has been said in the great confused murmur of discourse"; it does provide the form of a discourse and allows us to differentiate one discursive formation from another (129). But because "the archive cannot be described in its totality," it can only be pieced together by Foucault's method of "archaeology" (130). Discourse has a historical context, or a "historical a priori" which is "a group of rules that characterize a discursive practice: but these rules are not imposed from the outside on elements that they relate together; they are caught up in the very things they connect"(127). The archive we operate under is invisible, even nebulous. Foucault's archaeological analyses are always historical because "it is not possible to describe our own archive, since it is from within these rules that we speak… The archive cannot be described in its totality; and in its presence it is unavoidable. It emerges in fragments, regions, and levels, more fully no doubt, and with greater sharpness, the greater the time that separates us from it" (130). Though his archive in not a literal collection of documents, Foucault's method depends on collecting a vast body of documents circulating in society, defining and constraining subjects.

Even though Foucault defines the term insubstantially, a state can use its institutional archives to exert control over individuals. Two Foucauldian inquiries into the "law of what can be said" show the power of Foucault's model when applied to literal archives. Michel de Certeau's *The Writing of History* makes clear how important institutional archives are to the creation of history. Though he expresses admiration for Foucault, de Certeau's archive is a tangible thing, composed of documents that give authority to the historian's creation of history. Histories are made out of "given facts, archives, or documents" (29). Archives do not record history in any uncomplicated way, but they make up the historian's "technical game" of writing history. Archives are "a

world in which complexity is found, but sifted through and miniaturized, therefore capable of being formalized" (30). An archive is a "precious space" to a historian because it testifies to the "practices by which every society makes explicit, puts in miniature, and formalizes its most fundamental strategies, and thus acts itself out without the risks or responsibilities of having to make history" (30). The value of the archive is not purely documentary, because its construction reveals the Foucauldian *episteme* of its makers.

Literary critic Thomas Richards analyzes how the control of information through archives intertwines with the control of colonial populations in Victorian literature. In *The Imperial Archive*, Richards shows how institutional archives (including those of the British Museum, the Royal Geographic Society, the India Survey, and the universities) can be used to exert control over imperial subjects. Richards investigates both the political value of the archive as a place and the imperialist implications of archiving as an activity. He argues that by collecting information on its colonies, the British Empire supplemented its military, economic, and political control of far-flung subjects. The gathering of information and housing of records creates a powerful image of imperialist domination, symbolized by British Archive buildings in the colonies. The "total archive" that such projects strive to represent does not exist, but is a "fantasy of knowledge collected and united in service of state and Empire" (6). The archive, according to Richards, is an "operational field of projected total knowledge… the collectively imagined junction of all that was known or knowable, a fantastic representation of an epistemological master pattern" (11). Though centered in such recognizable "knowledge-producing institutions" as the British Museum, Richards's archive represents and enforces "the law of what can be said" in a manner similar to that described by Foucault. Like de Certeau, Richards demonstrates that literal archives play a role in creating a constraining framework for larger discourse.

Derrida elaborates his theory of the archive in his book *Archive Fever*, which grew out of a lecture delivered at the opening of the Freud museum in Vienna in 1994. This talk at Freud's final home, recently converted into a museum, was expanded and published as a book in 1995 in French as *Mal du archive: une impressione freudienne* and translated into English the following year. Though complex and wide-ranging, it is in essence a Freudian reading of archives. In any archive, Derrida finds a version of Thanatos, the death instinct, transformed into a destructive "archival violence" struggling against a version of Eros transformed into the archive's preservation of the past. The "archive fever" of the title stems from "the possibility of a forgetfulness which does not limit itself to repression" (19)—that loss which is built into the mechanics of the archive. Any archive transforms that which it preserves: "The archive always works, and *a priori*, against itself" (12). Archiving "produces as much as it records the event" (17). The meaning of documents is "codetermined by the structure that archives," by which he means both the transcribing technology (from the printing press to e-mail) and the act of archiving. By "archive," Derrida sometimes means the Freud museum, and sometimes means any form of inscription or any recording technology. Interchangeable for him are "the techniques of archivization, of printing, of inscription, or reproduction, of formalization, of ciphering, and of translating marks" (15). Either function of the archive, transcribing experience or storing documents, displaces and defers the recorded event. The archive "will never be either memory or anamnesis as spontaneous, alive and internal experience. On the contrary: the archive takes place at the place of original and structural breakdown of the said memory" (11), in the sense that it is the substitute or trace of lived experience. In distinguishing Foucault's theory of archive from Derrida's, reviewer Herman Rappaport explains that while Foucault's archive is stable and

authoritarian, Derrida's is marked by fragmentation and instability: "In short, where there is regularity and efficiency in Foucault's archive, there is trauma in Derrida's" (69).

Derrida's theory of the archive reflects the etymology of the word. He writes that the root *arkhë* invokes both "the *commencement* and the *commandment*" (1, emphasis in the original). As the etymology suggests, an archive is both historical—preserving a record of the beginnings of things—and authoritative—providing the basis of laws. Although archive can be a general metaphor for discourse, both these preservative and authoritative qualities are premised on a physical location. The Greek *arkeion* means

> a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the *archons*, those who commanded… On account of their publicly recognized authority, it is at their homes, in that *place* which is their house (private house, family house, or employee's house), that official documents are filed. The archons are first of all the documents' guardians. (2)

This notion of archon as the overseer of an archive has been adopted by practicing archivists. Sarah Tyacke acknowledges that archivists play that role because "the determination of whether to preserve/destroy, open/close is an essential part of archiving or recording, and is one of the distinctions between records/archives and other texts which have been created, as their primary purpose is already settled" (9). Even the Society of American Archivists seems to agree with Derrida, though without citing him and in much less sinister terms:

> The primary task of the archivist is to establish and maintain control, both physical and intellectual, over records of enduring value. Archivists select records, a process that requires an understanding of the historical context in which the records were created, the uses for which they were intended, and their relationships to other sources.

Derrida mentions three necessary conditions for an archive: "There is no archive without a place of consignation, without a technique of repetition, and without a certain exteriority. No archive without outside" (11, italics in original). In other words, an

archive requires some protective structure, some method of preservation, and a projected distinction between the archive and the not-archive, an "outside" patrolled by the archon. In working out a model of cultural memory based in part on Derrida's work, Dean Franco writes that "the modern demands of memory, including the demand for a history and the need for narrative that coherently establishes a meaningful present, make cultural archiving selective, value-laden, and political: it produces the past while producing the present" (377). The great value of Derrida's insights is that he articulates the constructed nature of the archive. The archon makes selections based on codified values, social and political pressures, and personal bias.

Michael Alexander, in an introduction to Pound for British readers, interprets *The Cantos* through three frames of reference in a single sentence: "This epic [*The Cantos*], which Pound described as 'the tale of the tribe', is also a tribal encyclopaedia, and in places resembles an archive" (142). The fact that the poet might be seen, in a single glance, as a "tribal" bard, encyclopedicist, and archivist attests to the poem's complexity.

There is indeed an overwhelming welter of documents that account for the fact that *The Cantos* "resembles an archive." In an early version of the first Canto, published in the June 1917 issue of *Poetry*, Pound calls Browning's *Sordello* "a rag-bag to stuff all its thought in…" and moreover something "that the modern world/Needs." Although he struck this line before the next publication of *The Cantos*, his modern analogue to *Sordello* provides just such a capacious structure necessary to contain "the modern world." The problem that modern archives face, the sheer number of documents resulting from growing activities and increasing complexity, is the same that Pound confronts in *The Cantos*. He "stuffs…the modern world" into *The Cantos* and invites his readers to participate in the difficult act of interpreting these difficult documents. At the end of his

poem "Hugh Selwyn Mauberly," Pound laments the unnecessary destruction of World War I:

> There died a myriad,
> And of the best, among them,
> For an old bitch gone in the teeth,
> For a botched civilization.
>
> Charm, smiling at the good mouth,
> Quick eyes gone under earth's lid,
>
> For two gross of broken statues,
> For a few thousand battered books. (*Personae* 188)

He laments the deaths of talented artists, like his friend Henri Gaudier-Brezka, in defense of a misguided civilization. In his long term project *The Cantos*, begun in the midst of World War I, he attempts to assemble an archive of cultural objects that a more noble and vigorous civilization might be built upon. This comprehensive cultural archive includes the textual descriptions of "broken statues" and other art works, citations of "battered books" and historical documents.

As if following Derrida's definition of "archive," Pound designates a textual "place" for this archive (called *The Cantos*), establishes a technique for preserving documents, and constructs "a certain exteriority," or a barrier of difficult obscurity beyond the recourse of any individual that seems to demand an institutional response. No reader is able to identify all the references in his archive, if for no other reason than Pound seeks out obscure sources, many outside of contemporary publishing circulation. His modified description of *The Cantos* as a poem "containing" rather than "including" history implies that his long-running, incomplete long poem is a *de facto* cultural and historical archive that "contains… heteroclite elements," and not a series of references to a shared history of assumed answers. Pound selected extensive citations of widely varying documents, archived them in print as discrete elements arranged in paratactic

fashion, and required readers to discover how these "documents" throw light on one another.

Michael Andre Bernstein points out that through "the scrupulous assemblage of concrete, observable details, the comparison and examination of specific minute features," Pound's reader is forced to deduce some meaning based on the relationship of the parts of the poem. Confronting this raw material, the reader's judgment is ideally "untainted by the abstraction and vagueness of all purely theoretical generalizations" (36). Bernstein rightly recognizes that from

> the conviction that all the essential characteristics of a particular civilization are discernible from a very restricted number of its artifacts, Pound was able to fashion an epistemology that gave him two crucial and dearly sought advantages. First it permitted him to think that the most fundamental truths, even about as multiple and various a subject as human culture, could be grasped (and hence also communicated) by means of individual and even fragmentary "luminous details." Then, it confirmed his intuition that the careful juxtaposition of isolated facts was no mere "poetic shorthand" but the rigorous application of the best "method of contemporary biologists" (37)

To validate his right to make this selection, to serve as *archon* for world culture, Pound cultivates his own authority to varying degrees throughout his work. His certainty in his judgment is expressed in terms of confidence in scientific analysis: the study of his textual objects should yield certain conclusions as surely as the comparison of biological specimens. Nevertheless, by presenting the documents directly, Pound invites the reader to share in the act of making meaning.

To share in this act, the reader must negotiate a paratactic arrangement of documents. *The Cantos* proceeds as a set of unit-to-unit accretions that elide connections. Parataxis is the only arrangement available to archivists: one object must abut another. Archivists do not use such hierarchical classification systems as a librarian might. The tremendous work of reading *The Cantos* is the work of the sorting through and

identifying materials, and then formulating interpretation based on the materials and the relationship among materials. The work of writing *The Cantos* was, in significant part, a matter of locating, selecting, and arranging source material. Pound discovered these materials in cultural repositories and translated them (in the Poundian sense of "carried over") into his own textual archive.

To more closely examine Pound's archival practices, I will focus on Cantos VII-XI, the so-called Malatesta Cantos. Not only do these Cantos mark Pound's first full-fledged step into the archival technique and incorporate material from an actual archive, they also resemble an archive, venerate an archivist (Sigismundo Malatesta), and praise an archive (the Tempio, constructed by the Malatestas as a cultural repository). In my examination of these Cantos, I hope to not only show the extent that Pound borrows from archival practice in arranging his material, but also show how his process of selection implies the unspoken rules (or "laws of the archive") governing his selection and arrangement. [11]

Pound's reading and research was vast, and some of the richest sections of *The Cantos*, including the Malatesta Cantos, derive from visiting and conducting research in archives. Peter D'Epiro's research in the Pound Archive at Yale's Beinecke Library discovered a mass of working notes on many primary and secondary sources relating to the Malatesta Cantos. Among these documents is a volume of notes from Pound's own archival research. In this commitment to archival research, D'Epiro takes a place in the long line of scholars responding to the "exteriority" of Pound's archival poem. Faced with irresolvable textual difficulty, Pound scholars are driven into archives to trace and place sources. D'Epiro recounts a full history of Pound's work on the Malatesta Cantos.

[11] I am in effect uniting Foucault and Derrida: The Derridian archon follows a Foucauldian "law of the archive." I am simplifying both thinkers in this formulation, since in both theories the archive itself (representing discourse to Derrida and the circulation of power to Foucault) has more power than an individual agent (the poet in my model).

The first stage of work began in the Siena Archives, were he read the letters confiscated in the "post-bag incident" recounted in Canto IX. He followed this research with visits to other archives in Rimini, Cesena, the Vatican, and other Italian cities, which he interspersed with extensive background reading and the inevitable cycle of drafting and revision (see D'Epiro 1-31 for a more detailed outline of the composition history). From his varied sources, Pound compiled a large base of factual information about Sigismundo's life.

Pound put a great value on archives and archival research. In *Guide to Kulchur*, he writes that archives and libraries are

> an argument to the pleasure of study. No one who has spent less time than I have in these odd corners can have an adequate idea of the unmined treasure lying about more or less ordered in Italy. Microphotography (*ut dicta*) shd. open up vast reaches of music. When one thinks of the number of old buffers ready to copy anything for a couple of lire, and apparently able to read the most crabbed script with ease, there is also a vista of possibility in typewritten copies of documents done with four of five carbons, one say for the local record…
>
> Naturally there is nothing duller than the results of such digging, UNLESS the searcher has some concept to work to. Not the document but the significance of the document. (220-221)

Though these archives include "unmined treasures," the documents must be incorporated into some framework or "concept" to reveal "the significance of the document." For Pound, the significance is usually to serve as evidence for some cultural high-water mark in world history, which he explicitly or implicitly contrasts with the contemporary world's falling off from that standard. Prefacing the above passage, he makes the intriguing observation that "[t]here are as many libraries and archives as there are librarians and *archivisti*" (220). Pound thus acknowledges the role of the custodian in shaping the collection. By following this declaration with a description of his research into archives, he joins with the *archivisti*, creating an archive as a medium for

communication. His publication of *The Cantos* parallels his proposed program of microphotography to disseminate archival documents.

Michael O'Driscoll, in his article "Ezra Pound's Cantos: 'A Memorial to Archivists and Librarians," is the first critic to focus on Pound's valuation of archives and archivists.[12] O'Driscoll describes *The Cantos* as a "compendium of archival documents and textual fragments…[and the] sum of countless gestures toward fictive and factive images." *The Cantos* "serves its readers best as a kind of cultural index—an appendix really—that proffers the excessive and dynamic intertextuality that comes of overly situating any text within the ideal (dis)order of the library" (174). O'Driscoll does not conceive of *The Cantos* as an archive itself, but argues that it employs an "indexical structure" to gesture toward documents from the archive of the world's "vast cultural heritage" (O'Driscoll 174, quoting Pound's *Guide to Kulchur* 53-54). O'Driscoll ignores the distinctions between archives and libraries, but he sees their shared activity of cultural preservation and cataloguing as the primary activity of *The Cantos*. Although the librarians and *archivisti* referred to in the poem may seem to play minor roles in *The Cantos*, they are richly praised by Pound because their primary preservative activity mirrors his own.[13] Among those Pound singles out for praise are Malatesta Novello ("Novvy" in Pound's characteristic familiarity), the family archivist whose presence in the Malatesta Cantos was reduced in revision. While O'Driscoll does not dwell overmuch on the archival nature of *The Cantos*, he does describe Pound's archival agenda. Despite the illusion of comprehensiveness, *The Cantos* is selective in what it integrates. O'Driscoll argues that as *archon*, Pound operates on a principle of exclusivity rather than

[12] This article was published in the Fall 1999 issue of *Studies of the Literary Imagination*, a special issue on "The Poetics of the Archive." This issue provides a useful survey of possible uses of archival theory in literary studies.

[13] Pound famously said that given a group of a few men, he could restart culture. Such a hypothetical project depends on a collection—an archive—of pivotal documents. Such was the project of *The Cantos*.

inclusivity (182). His privileging of selection over collection as a means of cultural caretaking gives us insight to Pound's fascist fascination. To Pound, Malatesta was a forerunner to Mussolini in that both figures represented a chance to recreate and reinvigorate a decaying culture. Pound believed that culture could still be recreated, either in the image of the Tempio or of Pound's own carefully constructed, selective cultural archive, *The Cantos*.

The Malatesta Cantos occupy a place near the beginning of what grew to be a massive work (over eight-hundred pages in the New Directions edition). They include the first pronounced inclusion of archival material in *The Cantos*, and the first extended portrait of a single figure. The central figure of the Malatesta Cantos is Italian nobleman Sigismundo Malatesta (1471-1468), a Renaissance soldier, engineer, and patron of the arts who was, despite a generally negative historical reputation, revered by Pound as a hero. Pound alludes to a number of Sigismundo's accomplishments, such as his successfully protecting his native Rimini against invading papal troops as a young man, various other military campaigns which he undertook as a mercenary, and his conversion of Rimini's San Francisco, a thirteenth-century Gothic church, into the Tempio Malatestiano, a repository of history and culture designed to venerate his family. Malatesta is one of Pound's "heroes of directed will" who fight against "the tragic loss of sensibility by which men live well" (Davenport 6). Malatesta's Tempio might be "a jumble and a junk shop… [but] it nevertheless registers a concept" (*Guide to Kulchur* frontispiece). That "concept," in its most abstract formulation, is the same concept that guides Pound throughout *The Cantos* and his critical writing: "to preserve some of the values that make life worth living" (*Guide to Kulchur* 8). Sigismundo and his Tempio take center stage only in these four Cantos, but they fit into patterns of personal virtue and cultural value implied by the body of *The Cantos*. As the first block of Cantos

examining a single subject, the Malatesta Cantos mark the first extended portion of the long poem in which Pound displays what might be called an archival treatment of documents.

Canto VII, the first of the Malatesta Cantos, outlines Sigismundo's career as military leader and patron of the arts. Among the sources of this Canto are two letters Malatesta wrote to Giovanni de Medici. These letters are presented directly, not by paraphrase or summary, and are inserted into the Canto as paratactic blocks, not subsumed into an explanatory mechanism. The opening of this Canto can be read as a rationale for this practice: "These fragments you have shelved (shored). / "Slut!" "Bitch!" Truth and Calliope / Slanging each other sous les lauriers…" (28). This Canto begins with what is to us an obvious allusion to *The Waste Land*. T.S. Eliot's poem would have been fresh in Pound's mind, since he had helped Eliot compile the poem out of a manuscript of separate poems and fragments only a few months before beginning work on Canto VII. The deformation of Eliot's "These fragments I have shored against my ruins" into "These fragments you have shelved (stored)" demonstrates Pound's archival preoccupations. "Shelved" and "stored" suggest an archivist's or librarian's interior, institutional work, while Eliot's "shored" suggests a scavenger's. Both lines suggest the archivist's task, to preserve records of the past from destruction, but Pound's suggest an awareness of further necessary work. The fragmentary nature of the incomplete sentence indicates the need for completion: the reader must become an agent to work with the archival fragments in order to aid "Truth," who quarrels strenuously with Calliope, the muse of epic (or received tradition) in the very next line. The tradition in this case is Malatesta's poor historical reputation. As a remedy, Pound offers a number of instructive fragments. Pound's next action in this Canto recreates the work of an archivist—dusting

off an old letter. Following the quarrel between Truth and Calliope, he presents a case for our consideration:

> …And Malatesta
> Sigismund:
> *Frater tamquam*
> *Et compater carissime: tergo*
> *…hanni de*
> *…dicis*
> *…entia*
> Equivalent to:
> Giohanni of the Medici,
> Florence. (28)

Pound does not paraphrase or allude to the contents of this letter, but presents it between the frames of matching colons: between the attributive "Sigismundo" and the translated "Equivalent to." The partial words (which would read "*Giohanni* / *de Medicis* / *Fiorentia*) have been damaged by Sigismundo's wax seal (Terrell 37). By focusing on the material properties of this letter, Pound recreates it as an archival document. The content of the letter has been translated into English in the following forty-two lines, occasionally interpolating the original Italian to remind us that we are reading the result of Pound's primary research. Taking the context that Pound builds around the letter, we can find in it evidence of Malatesta's courage, business acumen, forthright leadership, and artistic patronage, though Pound does not provide any commentary on the letter. Coming into this Canto for the first time, the precise details of the letter are confusing, even if the reader has a general knowledge of Renaissance history. Although now a reader can look up this reference in a guide to *The Cantos* like Terrell's or Alexander's, it represented an insurmountable barrier to the poem's original readers.[14] Not only does the citation represent an archival document, but Pound's inclusion of it creates a Derridian

[14] Even if such a handbook is not available, an Internet search of the recondite terms "Ezra Pound" and "…*hanni de*" results in six online sources that can explicate the passage.

exteriority. While readers can learn much from the poem by close reading and comparison of the documents, some references are ultimately irresolvable. Later in the Canto, a second letter to de Medici is quoted. Malatesta uses the same salutation, "*compater carissime*," or "dear companion," and tells his friend that he has switched sides ("Venice has taken me on again/At 7,000 a month…/For 2,000 horse and four hundred footmen") and is planning on constructing "bombards" to end his siege (30). In this broadening context, we see Malatesta's mercenary savvy and engineering acumen begin to emerge.

Canto IX concentrates on the construction of the Tempio, a sort of cultural archive venerating the house of Malatesta. Along with elaborate tombs for himself and his wife, Sigismundo oversaw the construction of the temple's walls adorned with images of Roman gods in bas relief, sarcophagi for the bones of scholars and poets, and the repeated imprint of his family seal. The Tempio was to Pound "a cultural 'high'" and the testament of what an individual could do even working "*against* the current of power" (*Guide to Kulchur* 159, emphasis Pound's). Like the "rag-bag" Pound saw in *Sordello*, the Tempio is "a jumble and a junk shop" (*Guide to Kulchur* frontispiece). A major source for the second part of Canto IX is another kind of "rag-bag," a mailbag stolen from by Sienese authorities. Sigismundo was at the time working for Siena as a mercenary, but his employers suspected his motives and so stole the mailbag from Sigismundo's courier to find out if he was conspiring against them. (Remember, it was at the Sienna Archives that Pound first read these letters.) Davenport describes the "substance of the mail" as including "notes on marble, naves, derricks, chicken soup, castles, a boy's pony, silver medals, a garden, and stone elephants" (169). Although Sigismundo was actually working against Siena, he was too crafty to be caught. The various pieces of mail contain somewhat interesting or colorful informational value, but

only as a collection of objects do they serve as evidential value of Sigismundo's craftiness. Taken together, these documents provide evidence that Sigismundo was too careful to be discovered by the Sienese authorities, even though they must have seemed to the Sienese to be evidence of his innocence. As the container of documents, the mailbag of Canto IX is a sort of provisional archive in itself. Hugh Kenner finds the mailbag and the Tempio to be the two "structural models for the poem…the one a clutch of documents proper to one time, the other a deliberate concentration of pieties and traditions, the parts finely crafted (and the structure unfinished)" (419). In Canto IX, where space is shared by the Tempio and post-bag, paratactic technique is taken to elaborate length. In its simplest formulation, parataxis simply means conjoining elements with "and." Of the eighty-one left-justified lines leading up to the contents of the post-bag, forty-five begin with the word "and." The poem is literally built out of discrete objects. The final line of this section, "And this is what they found in the post-bag" (37) introduces a succession of letters uninterrupted by commentary. Again, the arrangement is paratactic; the letters simply lie side-by-side.[15]

These methods are continued in the final two Malatesta Cantos. Canto X, which juxtaposes Sigismundo's conflicts and triumphs with Pope Pius II's charges against him, integrates a large block of the Pope's charges against Sigismundo. Canto XI, largely concerned with Sigismundo's downfall, adopts a more intimate tone and therefore dispenses with lengthy citations of documentary evidence. Instead, an unidentified first-person account is the main voice of the Canto. This voice still relies on parataxis:

> And he left three horses at one gate
> And three horses at the other,

[15] The fault of this "rag-bag" method of compiling information is that it might never end. Ultimately, this urge to "contain" history will prevent the poem from reaching a conclusion. As Pound says in a late fragment, after over-running his original plan for one hundred Cantos, "I cannot make it cohere." The poem eventually trails off into "drafts and fragments."

and Fatty received him
with a guard of seven cardinals “whom he could trust” (51)

This voice takes its place among those of the previous documents. Pound goes to the trouble of creating false credentials; he assures us at the end of Canto XI that “they put it all down in writing” (52). If we had not realized already, we now see that part of Pound’s mission is to restore the reputation of Malatesta, which suffered under papal indictments up until Pound’s day. Pound’s *ad hoc* archive is an attempt to correct the historical record.

Despite this last fabricated source, many of the documents integrated into *The Cantos* bear an identifying source-mark. This identification might be the closing of a letter, like the first letter to Giovanni de Medici discussed above (“SIGISMUNDUS PANDOLPHUS DE MALATESTIS/*In campo Illus. Domini Venetorum die 7/aprilis 1449 contra Cremonan*” (29); or the originating archive (“Aug. 5 1452, *register of the Ten of the Baily*” (30) or “*Florence, Archivo Storico, 4th Series t. iii, e/”La Guerra dei Senesi col conte di Pitigliano*” (42)); or publication data (“*Com. Pio II, Liv. VII, p. 85./Yriarte, p. 288.*”(44)). These attributions disrupt the discursive flow of the poem by marking a discrete object and distinct voice. Like the portrayal of the torn letter to de Medici at the beginning of Canto VII and the continual incorporation of original languages, identifying sources emphasizes the “document-ness” of these documents. This directness of presenting documents is continued throughout the Malatesta Cantos and on throughout the poem.

Pound’s documentary practice begins modestly in Canto I and continues until the last published installment, which makes extensive, clearly identified use of William Coke’s political writing. Canto I is an Anglo-Saxon style translation of a Latin rendering of the Book IX of the Odyssey. The narrative voice remains unbroken until near the end

of the Canto, when an authorial voice identifies the source of this Canto as "Andreas Divus, / In officina Wecheli, 1538, out of Homer" (5). The tag includes the author (Homer) translator and date (Andreas Divus), and publisher (the workshop of Wechelus, a Paris publisher). From the beginning, Pound was interested in the preserving and transmitting culture, here incorporating what amounts to a bibliographical record into his text. Davenport differentiates Pound from Eliot by noting that the former "rarely appropriates a line, but borrows it, frames it, and is careful to keep its identity, for its identity is its reason for being in the poem at all" (69). Pound diligently attributes his sources, eventually leading to the practice of self-citation beginning in Canto XXIV: "(That, I assure you, happened./ Ego, scriptor cantilenae," basing a conclusion on the ethos of "the author of these Cantos" (112). Thus, even the passages that do not derive directly from an archival source become "official" documents.

By integrating historical documents into a pattern of adjacent presentation, Pound's comprehensive long poem becomes what Thomas Richards, referring to British Imperial Archives, calls a "field of projected total knowledge" (11). If archives provide "evidence of how organizations functioned," Pound assembles a vast compendium of documents attesting to what he perceived as "cultural highs." He leaves to the readers much of the work of fitting the pieces together.

Before continuing, in the following chapters, to an extended examination of Louis Zukofsky's archival practices in his life and work, I would like to briefly mention a number of other archival long poems. In doing so, I hope to suggest that the archival frame is open to an wide variety of interpretations of a small but significant body of work by such poets as William Carlos Williams, Charles Reznikoff, and Charles Olson.[16] I will

[16] David Jones, speaking of his long poem *The Anathemata*, finds that "Part of my task has been to allow myself to be directed by motifs gathered together from such sources as have by accident been available to me and to make a work out of those mixed data" (9). He regards his long poem as "a series of fragments, fragmented bits, chance scraps really, of records of things, vestiges of sorts and kinds of *disciplinae*, that

not treat these poets at length, but will briefly consider each as a poet-archivist. All three integrate source materials into long poems in ways that provoke constructive responses from readers.

Like *The Cantos*, Williams's *Paterson* integrates 'non-poetic' documents. Williams's poem is, as much as Pound's, the result of historical research, although in addition to historical texts Williams also integrates personal letters. When preparing to write *Paterson* he "began to read all [he] could about the history of the [Passaic] Falls, the park on the little hill beyond it and the early inhabitants" (xiii). Unlike Pound, Williams's focus was local, a specifically American history discovered in such sources as *Historical Collections of the State of New Jersey, History of the City of Paterson and the County of Passaic New Jersey,* and *History of Paterson and its Environs: The Silk City,* to name a few of the key sources. The private history of Dr. Paterson, a thinly disguised version of Dr. Williams, is documented by lightly edited versions of letters which Williams received from Pound (unattributed, but obvious from the style), Ed Dahlberg (attributed to "E.D." and later "Ed"), Allen Ginsberg ("A.G."), and Marcia Nardi ("Cress"). Nardi's long accusatory letter alone accounts for a significant portion of Book Two, including all of the final five pages. The type of material that Williams chose to work with—local history and personal correspondence—suggest a different kind of archive. Pound's cultural repository veers from government archives to libraries, but *Paterson*, in drawing extensively on personal correspondence, partakes more from private archives. At the center of the five-part poem stands a significant act—the destruction of the Library. The celebratory act of destruction might be seen as a rejection of the tight

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have come my way by this channel or that influence" (34). He recalls a time when "the poet was explicitly and by profession the custodian, rememberer, embodier and voice of the mythus, etc. of some contained group of families, or of a tribe, nation, people, cult" (21). Jones styles himself as a historian, quoting Nennius: "I have made a heap of all I could find" (9). Like Nennius, he collects and preserves this "heap" of fragments so that this material "might not be trodden under foot" (9).

control and privileged sources found in Pound's archive. But ironically, after the library has been destroyed and its pages fly free, we are still left with a collection of texts, bound together as *Paterson*. But this long poem represents not an order shaped by received ideas about language or a classification system of texts but an accumulation shaped by a single personality and place. It is "an elucidation by multiplicity" (61), an epistemology defined by objects encountered by a man existing in an American locale.

The long poems of Charles Reznikoff also incorporate archival material. Two of Reznikoff's long poems, *Testimony* and *Holocaust*, incorporate legal records into them. *Testimony* is a history of the United States compiled from legal reports culled from records of several states, and *Holocaust* uses testimony from the Nuremberg and Eichmann trials. Indeed, Reznikoff identifies his "Objectivist" practice as that of a writer "who does not write directly about his feelings but about what he sees and hears; who is restricted almost to the testimony of a witness in a court of law; and who expresses his feelings indirectly by the selection of his subject-matter and, if he writes in verse, by its music" (Dembo 194). Reznikoff's version of Objectivist practice foregrounds the act of textual production. The massive research behind his long poems involved hours of reading and transcribing legal records. As a result of archival research at the Archive for New Poetry as the University of California at San Diego, M.A. Syverson discovered that even such purely autobiographical works as his "Early History of a Writer" are in fact compositions which incorporate documents—not legal documents or records of political history, but family memoirs. Reznikoff, like Williams, shows that the archival technique need not be so pronouncedly public, but can be based on personal archives.

There has been little more than passing reference to the similarities of archives and long poems in published criticism. Perhaps this lack derives from the fact that the poets themselves provided little guidance in this direction. In their published remarks on

poetry, I have found no references to archives as a conscious framework for the long poem. For an extensive explanation of the poetics of the archive by a practitioner of the craft, we must turn to an inheritor of the Pound/Williams tradition, Charles Olson. I mentioned in passing that those archival characteristics that require active reader participation—such as constructing meaningful relationships among textual objects and researching sources–can encourage the creation of critical industries around the poems. Obviously, this is not always the case. While there are still extensive industries built on Pound and Williams, Reznikoff, Zukofsky, and many others lack institutional currency. The example of Olson, the last archival poet I will consider in this chapter, shows the fluctuating activities of such industries. While Olson scholarship flourished in the 1970s, which saw the publication of several book-length studies and the establishing of a journal, *OLSON*, based on his literary archives, it has more recently gone into decline. Regardless, this scholarship did not propose a model of the archival poem either. Olson's comparatively little-known "Bibliography on America for Ed Dorn" is not even on its face a statement of poetics at all, but its implications are important not only to Olson's project, the massive collection known as *The Maximus Poems*, but to that strain of American poetry I describe as archival.

The bibliography was written in 1955 for Ed Dorn, a student at Black Mountain College at the time Olson was its rector. Dorn was a twenty-six-year-old undergraduate enrolled in a "private tutorial [with Olson] intended to 'organize [his] studies of the West'" (Clark, *Charles Olson* 249). Lore has it that because Olson was socially withdrawn at the time, he wrote the bibliography late at night and delivered it in the pre-dawn darkness in two installments on successive days to Dorn's window so that, as Dorn said, "it came to me at breakfast" (Clark, *Edward Dorn* 250). The reading list itself is, according to Ralph Maud, derivative of Frederick Merck (Olson's history professor at

Harvard who collaborated with Frederick Jackson Turner on the book-length bibliography *A List of References on the History of the West*) and Carl O. Sauer (an admired historian whose works are included in the "Bibliography)."[17] Olson's missive to Dorn begins with what Olson refers to as a "TABLE OF CONTENTS," stating the assumptions, premises, and presumed results of the document, and then moves on to a "PREFACE" that introduces the four coordinates of the bibliography: millennia/quantity on one axis and person/process on another. These four individual topics provide the body of the bibliography, though the bulk of the actual reading list appears in the Appendix A, which apparently substitutes for section IV, on "Quantity," in the body. (Section IV reads *in toto* "Quantity (continued in our next…" implying that he would take it up the next night in the second installment of the document.) A premature closing ("Love, O") follows the Appendix, after which Olson continues over two postscripts for three more pages.

As it explores different territory than Olson's best-known statement on poetics, "Projective Verse" (1950), the bibliography might be thought of as a supplement to that essay. It answers that essay's focus on the line with a focus on the broader project of the long poem. "Projective Verse" is well known and widely quoted, particularly the passage that cites Robert Creeley's axiom that "FORM IS NEVER MORE THAN AN EXTENSION OF CONTENT" (239). As a codification of Black Mountain/Projectivist poetics, it is certainly his most influential prose piece, appearing as it does at the beginning of the poetics sections of both Don Allen's *New American Poetry 1945-1960*, and, years later, Paul Hoover's *Postmodern American Poetry*. It is the at least symbolic fountain of the rich and varied field of Postmodern poetics. However, a purposeful

[17] Olson admired Sauer so much that he was "*scared* to 'review' him! He's like the Library itself!" (*Letters* 363).

reading of the lesser-known "Bibliography " provides a model of poetic work for the practitioner of the long poem—that of the reseacher—and a model for the long poem—the archive. Read within the frame of poetics, the bibliography is not only "a classic specimen of [Olson's] slash-and-burn scholarship at its most decisive and opinionated" (Clark, *Charles Olson* 250), but also a description of his poetic practice. Although the context of this document is Dorn's studies at Black Mountain, the fact that both men wrote notable long poems suggests it might be read as a statement of poetics specifically applicable to the long poem. Following the bibliography's lead, we can imagine the long poem as an archive and the act of composition as a long-term project of research and collection.[18]

The bibliography, originally a private document, has found a place as part of Olson's published work. Don Allen's Four Seasons Foundation published it under the title we use now in 1964, and it was included in Allen and Ben Friedlander's *Collected Prose*. It is occasionally cited in Olson criticism. Ralph Maud's book on Olson's expansive reading calls on it as a model for Olson's earlier exhaustive scholarship on Melville: "we can see Olson is here standing by the achievements and procedures of his own fourteen years of assiduity" between his master's thesis and the publication of *Call Me Ishmael*, his study of *Moby Dick* (41). Sherman Paul cites the Bibliography as evidence of Olson's devotion to scholarship, elevating as it does bibliography to an "art form." For Olson, "knowledge… is primary engagement: the fronting of reality and a result of our confrontation with reality" (Paul 69). Both these examples approach the

[18] Even Olson stopped short of directly invoking the archive as a model for the long poem, though he saw the problem of the long poem as a search for form. In a letter to Cid Corman, Olson writes of "the hunch that a long form is a shape question—that form, in the sense in which we (who are staying out in the open) seek it, is still to be achieved inside each unit—that none of us are yet able to be sure what a form, over, say, a poem of such length as Dante's Comedy—or better, for my choice, the Odyssey—can be" (Corman 496). Neither Homer nor Dante could provide the form he was searching for. Instead, he found it in his pedagogical practice as a historian.

bibliography as the work of Olson the scholar and pedagogue rather the Olson the poet—not that Paul or Maud enforce an artificial distinction between these roles.

Olson constructs a schema of intersecting "axes of relevance" which reveal the importance of the local. Visually, these axes create an X that marks the spot of the local, though his verbal locution ("The local…becomes crucial once the crossed-sticks of these axes is used to pick it up" (298)) makes them sound like epistemological chopsticks. As the reader of *Maximus* knows, the importance of the local to Olson's poetry is crucial. It is plotted by these coordinates: "millennia" and "quantity" on one axis, and "person" and "process" on the other. Olson defines "millennia" as opposed to "time as history" (297): Linear history does not concern him, "but time spatialized… the fullness of time" (Paul 71) does. This is the sense of history as a field, as "the totality in which we stand, to which we stand, to which we actually relate" derived from Olson's reading of Alfred North Whitehead (Paul 72). The opposite end of this axis is "quantity." Olson writes "One must… apply to quantity as a principle (totally displacing hierarchies of taste or quality, as though there were any other 'like than an attention which has completely saturated or circumvented the object'" (297). The category becomes necessary because "plural & quality (taste)—King Numbers & King Shit—obscure how it is." His archival method, which ultimately extends content into form, requires the amassing of "quantity"—the investigation of all available sources of knowledge for a given topic, not relying on existing narratives, assumptions, or categories.

The other axis, as stated above, ranges from "person" to "process." "Person" is, like "millennia," also defined by negation: it is *not* "the individual as single"(297). Rather, a person is to be understood as a member of a group of actors and objects (as with time, it is for Olson a spatialized concept). "Process" is analogous to the Daoist "way" but also to Olson's stated methodology. "Process," like the other terms, is used

throughout Olson's prose. "Projective Verse" includes an injunction to "USE USE USE the process at all points, in any given poem always, always one perception must must must MOVE, INSTANTER, ON ANOTHER" (240). The four coordinates identified in the bibliography are manifest in *Maximus*: history as a present, accessible field; the individual as an aspect of the polis; the projective process; and the ongoing quantitative investigation of the human record.

The idea of quantity inspires Olson's passionate injunction to Dorn to "saturate" himself with all available knowledge on a given subject, digging through published material to archival documents. In Appendix A, Olson lists numerous texts of history, geology, and myth, before moving on to "quantity" (("Here's where IV comes in" (306))—returning to the postponed conclusion of the previous night's installment), stressing the importance of "PRIMARY DOCUMENTS. And to hook on here is a lifetime of assiduity. Best thing to do is *to dig one thing or place or man* until you yourself know more abt that than is possible to any other man. It doesn't matter whether it's Barbed Wire or Pemmican or Paterson or Iowa. But *exhaust* it. Saturate it. Beat it" (306-307 emphasis in Olson). Such comprehensive knowledge of a single topic (thing, place, or man) leads to something like universal insight: "And then U KNOW everything else very fast: one saturation job (it might take 14 years). And you're in, forever" (307).[19] This deep knowledge of a single, local topic, informed by millennia, person, process, and of course quantity far exceeds that found in books. Olson tells Dorn that "the point is *to get all* that's been said on a given subject. And I don't mean books: they stop. Because their makers are usually lazy. Or fancy. Or they are creative. And that's the end… QED:

[19] An example of a poet who has undertaken such a "saturation job," consider Clayton Eshelman, who cites this passage in the introduction to his *Juniper Fuse: Upper Paleolithic Imagination & the Construction of the Underworld* ((xii). Having completed an extensive study of prehistoric cave art quite consciously as a poet (focusing on imagery and allowing full play to his imagination) rather than an archaeologist, he cites this passage as an early inspiration.

you'll have to dig *mss*" (307). Archives, free from the constraints of books and limitations of authors are clearly preferable. Olson lists several which could be useful for Dorn's studies, noting the location for each:

> As of Am. history:
> Repository #1: THE NAT'L ARCHIVES, Wash., D.C.
> #2 Senate Documents (published)
> #3: Bureau of Am. Ethnology Reports & Bulletins
> (pub. by Smithsonian Inst.)
> & then, depending on subject, all over the place:
> ex., Donner Pary, Sutter's Fort Mus., & Cal. State Libr., Sacramento
> ex., the Adamses: Mass. Hist. Soc., Boston
> Ex.: Whaleship *Essex:* privately owned, Perc Brown, oilman, Jersey—at cruxes, mss will be in private hands, & one has trouble, patience, breaks getting same.
>
> But it doesn't matter—all goes back to the ONE JOB—that's where one's nose is whittled. If you don't do that one, you can never do the others. (307)

The single, defining (or "nose whittling") "JOB" was for Olson, of course, *Maximus*. Research into Gloucester's history is everywhere manifest in his long poem. To take one example, Letter 16 of volume I consists mainly of direct citation of at least five private documents from eighteenth-century Massachusetts. Such passages not only provide evidence of Olson's own saturation in local archives, but demonstrate that his long poem acts as a sort of archive itself.

History (millennia), person, process, and quantity are all interlocking systems composing of particular things, locations, and people. A saturation job into any node of the system provides entrée into, and understanding of, the entire set of systems. This is why after one lengthy study, "you're in. Forever." A long poem like *Maximus*, as one potential outcome of a lifetime of assiduity, therefore represents a particular sensibility. This sensibility might be called "an object-based epistemology." One turns to a quantity of objects, found in the archive, to avoid false equivalences or safe assurances of

established hierarchies. Olson begins the bibliography with the observation "that *politics & economics*…can only be individual experience… and therefore, as they have been presented… are not much use, that is, any study of the books about [them would be useless]" (297). It is only in an open field, an archive composed of original records, that such essential knowledge can be won. Although Olson objected to dismissive comparisons of his work to Pound's, it was from *The Cantos* that Olson approached "the problem of larger content and of larger forms" ("Projective" 248)—a problem whose solution he and a number of poets other poets found in archives.[20]

[20] Since I posited this bibliography as a communication between poets as much as between teacher and student, one might reasonably ask what use Ed Dorn made of it in his later work and thought. Within ten years, Olson had begun to probe Dorn for information on the West. In a letter from 1965, Olson asks Dorn "As you pick up on this Far West stuff let me in, if you wld, on anything which seems to you to shove anything *new* there…" (*Letters* 362, emph orig.) He goes on to ask Dorn's opinion of Parkman's *Oregon Trail* and Devoto's *Year 1846* (363). The student has become a better-informed colleague. In 1968, the first volume of Dorn's *Gunslinger* was published by Black Sparrow. This first part of what ultimately became the long poem *Slinger* came out almost fourteen years after Dorn received the bibliography in January of 1955. By the time *Slinger* was finished, it had become a linguistically playful, Wittgensteinian horse opera which is intellectually informed by the bibliography (see Davidson) but bears no marked archival features such as direct citation.

Chapter 2

"Historic and Contemporary Particulars": Zukofsky the Archivist

For the remainder of this dissertation, I will focus on another poet for whom the archive was an important framework: Louis Zukofsky, who worked on his long poem *"A"* from 1928 to 1974. In later chapters I will closely examine *"A"*, but first I will show that Zukofsky acted as an archivist in endeavors other than poetry. Indeed, perhaps more than any other American poet, Zukofsky was devoted to the practice of archiving in his personal, poetic, and professional lives. He worked as an archivist for the Works Project Administration's *Index of American Design*. Later, as an instructor at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, he created *ad hoc* archives to assist in instruction. These projects might be thought of as secondary to his literary work, since they were paid jobs that took time away from his ambitious literary projects. But evidence shows he used the principles of archives in many modes, culminating in the creation of his own literary archive and of *"A"*. All of these texts and projects include collections of documents that possess both informational value individually and evidential value when read as a collection. They all imply a confidence in an object-based epistemology that resonates with his early statements on poetics. He created arrangements of what he called "historic and contemporary particulars" (*Prepositions* 12) that allowed those "particulars," as individual objects, to speak for themselves.

To put his archiving in the context of his career, I will begin with a brief overview of Louis Zukofsky's life.[21] He was born in the Lower East Side of Manhattan in

[21] Until Mark Scroggins's biography of Zukofsky sees print, the best sources of information on his personal life and professional activities are the remembrances from colleagues and acolytes collected in the National Poetry Foundation's *Louis Zukofsky: Man and Poet* and the biographical chapter of Scroggins's

1904, the first American-born son of Lithuanian immigrants. Like William Carlos Williams and Gertrude Stein, his first language was not English—it was Yiddish in his case. He enrolled in Columbia University at the age of sixteen, studying with Mark Van Doren, John Dewey, and John Erskine (among others) and eventually earning an M.A. in 1926. Although he parodied Columbia's Great Books curriculum in his earliest noteworthy poem, "Poem beginning 'The,'" he remained a lifelong scholar devoted to the Western Tradition, and all of his major works integrate literary and philosophical precursors. Zukofsky began work on *"A"* in 1927, sketching out a master plan on a scrap of paper still preserved in his archive. He established contact with Ezra Pound shortly thereafter, and it was through Pound that he gained the guest-editorship of *Poetry* magazine's February 1931 issue and the accompanying (temporary) notoriety as founder of the "Objectivist" movement. He also met William Carlos Williams through Pound, and the two became lifelong friends and correspondents.[22] With neither Pound's penchant for self-promotion nor Williams's professional training, Zukofsky cast about for means of making a living throughout the thirties and forties, working for the Works Project Administration, for a technical writing house, and as a substitute teacher at high schools before finding a position at the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute from 1947 until his retirement in 1966.

The most important events of Zukofsky's personal life are without doubt his marriage to Celia Thaew in 1939 and the birth of their son Paul in 1942. Considering the

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Louis Zukofsky and the Poetry of Knowledge. From these sources we learn the basic biographical facts of Zukofsky's life.

[22] While the standard histories of twentieth-century poetry have figured Zukofsky as a minor disciple of Pound and Williams and *"A"* as an imitation of *The Cantos*, more recent work by Scroggins, Tim Woods, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Bob Perelman, and others demonstrate Zukofsky's unique achievement and influence. To many critics, *"A"* represents a new, open form of the long poem that, as Peter Quartermain says, "achieve[s] a simultaneity of multiples, political, aesthetic, historical, economic, linguistic" (61). While whole-heartedly agreeing with such more nuanced readings of Zukofsky's work, I am here in fact arguing that Zukofsky's innovations derived from the same archival pursuits as his more famous forebearers.

increasingly domestic focus of his poetry and the habit of modest living that the family developed, it is perhaps surprising to see that Zukofsky pursued such large-scale projects. But domestic life eventually became the focus of *"A"* and later works, including his novel *Little*, a fictionalized account of Paul's early musical career. Zukofsky undertook many projects and wrote in most literary forms: poems long and short, personal essays and literary criticism, a drama, several short stories, and the novel. He brought a similar thoroughness and scope to his extra-literary projects as well, as I will show in his devotion even to work that he resented as taking time away from his writing.

Zukofsky saw his literary work as the collecting of "found objects." He describes this collecting work in the introduction to a selection of short poems called *Found Objects*:

> With the years the personal prescriptions for one's work recede, thankfully, before an interest that *nature as creator* had more of a hand in it than one was aware. The work then owns perhaps something of the look of *found objects* in late exhibits—which arrange themselves as it were, one object near another—roots that have become sculpture, wood that appears talisman, and so on: charms, amulets maybe, but never really such things since the struggles so to speak that made them do not seem to have been human trials and evils—they appear entirely *natural*. (*Prepositions* 168)

This passage demonstrates Zukofsky's supreme confidence in objects to speak for themselves. A poet's work is simply gathering and arranging them. Zukofsky quoted Spinoza's phrase "nature as creator" repeatedly, beginning with his "Program: 'Objectivists, 1931'" essay and on to his late works. Scroggins explains the influence of Spinoza's thought on what he calls Zukofsky's "Objectivist epistemology." Like Spinoza, Zukofsky is profoundly anti-skeptical; his work relies on the perception of objects as the source of knowledge. As the above passage indicates, Zukofsky thought of his work as "a composing that involves hunting and gathering" more than it does imaginative inspiration (Scroggins 214). Composition is the active process of finding and assembling material,

and preserving it in some sort of literal or figurative archive. The phrase "Objectivist epistemology" obviously recalls Steven Conn's "object-based epistemology," and indeed both describe the centrality of collecting and assembling objects to construct meaning.

Given that Zukofsky's "Objectivism" was in a sense a fictitious movement, and that the original "members" differed with Zukofsky's program in various important ways, it is perhaps unfortunate that so much Zukofsky criticism turns on "Objectivism" as a controlling concept. Nevertheless, the "Objectivist" principles that Zukofsky outlined in his early essays express an early version of his object-based epistemology. As the founder and chief theorist of the Objectivists, Zukofsky wrote what amounts to the quasi-movement's manifesto, an essay entitled "Sincerity and Objectification." This essay provides a program for the "non-symbolist, post-imagist poetics, characterized by a historical, realist, anti-mythological worldview" (DuPlessis and Quartermain 5) of the Objectivists.[23] To Zukofsky, "sincerity" is the close observation of the object of a poem, which is recorded by the precise language of the poem. "Objectification," the next goal of a poet, is the "rested totality" of a poem as completed work, "the apprehension satisfied completely as to the appearance of the art form as an object" (*Prepositions* 194). Tim Woods finds an ethical dimension in "sincerity." It "comes close to honesty… by not forcing any thoughts or making any images conform to some preestablished, *a priori* philosophical and social formulae, or poetic conventions" (22). Objectification, the process that follows the sincere apprehension of an object or event, "is making the poem into a thing, an object in the world" (Woods 23). The ethical obligation of the poet, as outlined in Zukofsky's essay, is to investigate the world with sincerity and record it with

[23] While my use of the term "Objectivist" applies primarily to the poets of Zukofsky's circle, some critics, including Charles Altieri, have applied "Objectivism" to the line of descent from Williams to the Black Mountain School.It is worth noting, furthermore, that "Objectivist" is widely acknowledged as an impromptu designation coined for the 1931 issue of *Poetry* guest-edited by Zukofsky. It does not describe an actual movement.

objectification. Zukofsky recorded this notion in *"A"*, defining his "objective," or goal as a poet, as a "desire for the objectively perfect, / Inextricably the direction of historic and contemporary particulars" (24). Such "particulars," including images recorded by his eye but also documents cited in the long poem, become raw material for his poetry.

Zukofsky's work, of both literary and non-literary varieties, inevitably involved organizing what Peter Quartermain calls, invoking Zukofsky's own Objectivist poetics, "the particulars of the physical world, [of] material daily living" into a "*material* register of the poet's own registry of that world" (6, emphasis in the original). This registry (and Quartermain no doubt intends both of the word's meanings, to sense and a record) is an archive, whether it be a poem or some type of collection. It is a composition of objects, though for a writer, the "objects" are inevitably textual—that is, documents. Zukofsky showed an inclination toward archiving early on, and his thinking was certainly shaped by concerted practice of archiving in his professional life. To better understand this practice, I will first turn to a detailed examination of his professional archiving work on the *Index of American Design*, and then turn to two archives-influenced projects, his anthology *A Test of Poetry* and a visual archive he assembled to assist in his teaching.

Zukofsky worked for the Works Project Administration from 1934 to 1941. The WPA is best known for its public works, such as the roads, bridges, and parks built by unemployed unskilled laborers. But programs such as the Federal Writer's Project and the Federal Arts Project hired unemployed writers and artists to write local histories, stage theatrical productions, and paint murals. Starting in 1936, Zukofsky worked as a researcher and writer for the *Index of American Design*, a subsidiary of the Federal Arts Project devoted to creating an extensive visual and descriptive archive of American craftwork (Sherwood vii). The *Index* was intended to be an encyclopedia composed of articles on American handiwork and design, accompanied by pictures of exemplary craft

objects. It was never published as such, but the work completed by the researchers, writers, and artists is now in the collection of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Zukofsky described the project's plans as follows:

> The artists, research workers, and writers of the Index, a division of the New York City Art Project, are preparing for publication a monumental history of American handicrafts. The whole field of manual and decorative crafts in American will be summed up in colored and black and white plates together with written descriptions of the objects rendered.
>
> The Index of American Design promises to be a new history of our country from the earliest days down to the present revival of handicrafts. (149)

The Index was intended to document a wide variety of American craft objects in a single collection. Zukofsky's contributions to the Index included several essays and radio scripts, which were intended to promote the project but never aired.

Though he approached his job with gusto, letters show that Zukofsky clearly felt that the job was keeping him from work on "A"-8, his main writing project at the time. However, he devoted himself to this work with assiduity. He was interested enough in the subject matter to propose writing a book on American craftwork. Among his papers is an "Outline for Book on American Arts Design," dated 12 November 1937. It is a four-page document including a "chronological and thematic" chart as well as a proposal of his intended project (Box 14.9). The first page of the document consists of a chart which matches three historical categories ("I. From Europe to Democracy; II. Factions of Democracy; III After the Civil War") on the vertical axis with eight thematic categories (A. Political; B. Social; C. National; D. Economical; E. Nodes (*sic*) of Production; F. Cultural; G. Effect on American Design; H. Suggested Dates) on the horizontal axis. The chart suggests how the topic of handicraft changed during the three eras, in reaction to "Economical" factors such as the rise of "Corporate Power" and the "Advent of the Machine." This far-ranging chart casts handicraft in a remarkable role, linking it to the

political relationships between the United States and Europe, to "Statistical Thinking," and even to "Electromagnetic Induction." As a prospectus, the outline is intended "to be verified by the facts and not imposed on them."[24] Zukofsky proposes that his work for the Index project should be "confined to historical reading which will verify" his outline and to consultation with experts in various fields. Scratched out at the bottom of the proposal is a request for a personal typist, suggesting that while Zukofsky may have had a sincere interest in the subject, this proposal was also an attempt to make the best of his situation by opening up the time to do the comprehensive historical research that "A"-8 demanded by freeing him from more mundane tasks such as typing. Ultimately, Zukofsky never wrote this book, though the work he did on the Index does invoke some of the themes suggested by his proposal.[25] Instead of conducting such a broad synthetic overview, Zukofsky researched specific topics, such as ironwork, chalkware, and tinware. Nevertheless, as his description of the project (cited above) indicates, he found in this craftwork the basis for "a new history of our country": that is to say, a history made out of objects.

Relatively few critical works examine Zukofsky's involvement with the Index. The essays that do discuss it, most notably Barry Ahearn's "Zukofsky, Marxism, and American Handicraft" and Ira B. Nadel's " 'Precision of Appeal': Louis Zukofsky and the *Index of American Design*," interpret Zukofsky's participation in this project as an influence on his devotion to poetic craft through its focus on artisanship, rather than noting influence of the archival practice itself. Ahearn notes the references throughout "A"-8 to American design and specifically to Zukofsky's work on the Index. According

[24] As he wrote for Jerome Rothenberg's *Big Jewish Book*, "the poet's form is never an imposition of history but the desirability of projecting some order out of history" (qtd in Perelman, *Trouble* 181)
[25] *A History of American Design* is included in his list of unwritten works in "A"-12 (257). Also included in this catalogue is a story to be titled *The Hounds*, apparently to be based on the life of a seventeenth-century iron worker (256).

to Ahearn, "Zukofsky saw that his work for the Index… could contribute to his poem's concern with the labor process and with beauty, for he was studying objects that combined elements of both" (83). Ahearn argues that Zukofsky's work for the project contributed to his class-consciousness as an artist in that Zukofsky, as a Marxist, styles himself as a pre-industrial craftsman. Using the Index work as a frame for the concurrent work on "A", it seems to Ahearn that Zukofsky's long poem is "not quite at home in an industrial era" (91). Although *"A"* "exists in an age when mass production techniques have apparently eliminated handicrafts, [it] is an American handicraft" (90). Nadel likens Zukofsky's writings for the Index to the cultural criticism of Henry Adams in *Mont St. Michel and Chartres*, of William Carlos Williams in *In the American Grain*, and of Pound in *Guide to Kulchur* (114). These books resist easy classification, but they are all to some extent works of historiography that authorize if not valorize other literary projects by their authors.[26] Zukofsky's analyses of design "enact his…aesthetic of the particular"; an aesthetic expressed in his essays and poetry (Nadel 114). Nadel, even more than Ahearn, makes an argument for the transformational effect of the Index work on Zukofsky's poetics:

> [I]t immersed him in American history; it confirmed the method initiated by the Objectivist "movement"; it underlined the value of citation and keen observation; it united a poetics of detail with the plot of history; it clarified Zukofsky's emerging social and political thought; and finally, it reflected an aesthetic that required the proximity of lost or forgotten objects—if not in actuality, then by reproduction. (115)

Like Ahearn, Nadel sees the fruit of this work evident in *"A"*. Zukofsky's long poem exhibits "research, documentation, definition, history, and fact, vying with each other in

[26] John Taggart's afterword to Sherwood's edition makes a connection between what I have suggested as the archival project of American Modernist poetry and Zukofsky's WPA work. Taggart finds a similarity in Zukofsky's design work to William's quest for "real cultural forms" (in contradistinction to Eliot's "private museum of private sensibility," a "museum" free of "American fragments") (228). According to Taggart, Williams and Zukofsky both produce craftwork despite capitalist mass production (229).

poetic statement" (121). Zukofsky's mature poetics is the outgrowth and refinement of the Index work, which "completed a decade devoted to exploring the value of sight, detail, particulars, and fact—and the conclusion that it is impossible 'to communicate anything but particulars—historic and contemporary—things'" (125). Nadel, like Quartermain, Perloff, and many other of Zukofsky's critics, interprets *"A"* as a composite structure consisting of things. He proclaims that "[t]hings, in fact, are the text of *'A'*," further supporting this position by citing Zukofsky's equation in "A"—12: "Texts: Things" (114).

From his work on the Index, Zukofsky learned how to make historic particulars speak. Kenneth Sherwood's introduction to Zukofsky's collected Index writings (*A Useful Art: Essays and Radio Scripts on American Design*) suggests this connection between Zukofsky's Index work and his poetry. Poetic craft is valorized in "A"-8 and "A"-9, as well in his anthology *A Test of Poetry*, all works begun during his tenure at the Index.[27] In imitation of Karl Marx in *Capital*, Zukofsky allows objects to speak for themselves in "A"-9, a practice he followed earlier in the Index. The Index focused for Zukofsky his belief in objects to tell stories. His poetry making becomes analogous to the work of the famous cabinetmaker Duncan Phyfe, who retired from active commerce but "continued to make presentation pieces to his family" (Sherwood 184). Zukofsky's poetry writing was, economically speaking, outside of active commerce; rather, various poems employ personal address and private references to emphasize their status as objects crafted for a family audience.

[27] As an example of early American craftsmanship applied to his poetry, consider the parallel between the use of personal initials by ironworkers and Zukofsky's use of family initials. Sherwood observes that "[u]nlike craft objects, Zukofsky's poem includes initials as *realia*, metonyms of the everyday or social context out of which the poem grows. Compared with the values of literary authorship, such minimalist marking minimizes the contribution of the individual" (129).

Zukofsky's contributions to the Index include four essays on American craftwork, none of which was published in his lifetime, and scripts for eight radio broadcasts (and notes for three additional broadcasts) which were never produced. His earliest essay from this series, "American Ironwork (1581-1790)" dates from August 1938. His essay "Chalkware" was completed in September 1938, "American Tinware" in January 1939, and "American Kitchenware, 1608-ca. 1875" in April 1939. He then switched to radio scripts, finishing "The Henry Clay Figurehead," "American Tinsmiths," and "A Pair of New York Water Pitchers" all in November 1939 ; completing "Binnacle Figure—1851" and "'Wide Awake' Lantern and Eagle" in December 1939; "Duncan Phyfe" and "Carpenters of New Amsterdam" in January 1940; and "Remmey and Crolius Stoneware" in February 1940. Notes for an incomplete script on "The Caswell Carpet" are dated February 1940, for "Friendship Quilts" dated March 1940, and for "Cotton Historical Prints" April 1940. The four essays are all thoroughly researched, highly detailed, and historically conscious. While some of Zukofsky's prose tends to be convoluted, the Index essays are generally clear.[28] Zukofsky's love of words and wordplay shows through: "The many ways of mincing and cutting meat, such as 'smyting on gobbets,' 'chopping on gobbets' and 'hewing' required different instruments such as mincing knives, saws, clevers (sic), and hooks for hanging carcasses and joints" (99-100). But although the subject of these essays is craft, it seems that the focus of his work was research.

The extent of Zukofsky's research is reflected by the essays' ample bibliographies. Even his shortest essay on the relatively obscure craft of chalkware finds ten sources to support a four-page history (supplemented by a three-page inventory of

[28] Guy Davenport, with characteristic brio, wrote that "Zukofsky wrote prose as a race horse walks: nervous, skittery, itching for the bugle and the track" (108).

notable examples); his longest essay, on ironwork, cites fifty-eight sources. The later kitchenware bibliography is more varied and a bit longer, citing eighty-six sources, including two of Zukofsky's own earlier Index writings. Zukofsky's pursuit of detail leads him to track down the first ironworks in various regions, the names of blacksmiths in the seventeenth century, and so on. He makes extensive use of primary sources, from advertisements for tinware in the Dedham, MA newspaper the Columbian Minerva to personal letters of the tin merchant Calvin Whiting (72-73). As we would expect, Zukofsky incorporates his research with extensive citations throughout these writings. He incorporates materials from the letters of John Winthrop Jr. (20) to extensive technical information on manufacturing iron (31-35). (These latter passages might remind the reader of the incorporation of physics textbooks in the apparatus of *The First Half of "A"-9.*) Zukofsky, with a lifelong dedication to poetry both familiar and obscure, incorporates verses about iron (22) and tin (69-71, 77), not to mention Jonathan Swift's advice concerning skewers: "Send up our meat well stuck with skewers, to make it look round and plump" (127) in his kitchenware essay.

Zukofsky had not only an eye for detail, but also a profound belief in the importance of details, or "particulars." On the subject of ironwork in the colonies he depicts domestic life in terms of the craft. In a simple declarative sentence such as, "The colonists had to start from scratch: make tools of iron to break the ground, and nails and cooking utensils for their houses," we can see that Zukofsky creates a portrait of domestic life out of a list of details—out of individual objects (18). Zukofsky shows a special fondness for compiling such objects into lists throughout the Index writings. As one example among many, he lists things that colonial blacksmiths made: "dripping pans, frying pans, chafing dishes, broad axes, falling axes, knives, spades, shovels, ladles, pans,

shears, saws, coffee roasters, etc." (27).[29] The cumulative effect of this list implies a world made out of objects. Zukofsky demonstrates a desire to comprehensively categorize these objects. For example, ironwork falls into "five convenient classes: Architectural ironwork (nails, door hardware, ties, etc.); Weathervanes; Fire and kitchen implements; Lighting devices; Decorative and miscellaneous" (39). Within these categories he makes further divisions, and even further subdivisions. He categorizes the architectural ironwork of door hardware into hinges (finding four types of these), hasps, latches, knobs and pulls, locks, and knockers (41-43). Tin is divided into four categories of two types, painted (toleware) and unpainted. He even devises subcategories for kitchenware (99ff). Even as he devises these categories, he appraises their variety: "Considering various collections, the eye is impressed by their miscellaneousness. The names identify the uses: sugar-loaf cutter; cooker for small game; toasting fork…" and so on (100). He frequently notes significant examples of these details: from significant weathervanes (noting, to the delight of a reader familiar with the central motif of "A" , three in the form of horses (45)), to a long list of chalkware ("The Index of American Design has made and filed drawings and data of the following chalkware objects" –a list of thirty three items in three collections including description, origin, and dimensions.) He also inventories tin (77-82, 86-91), spoon racks (118), and cake boards (121-122).

Out of these collected objects Zukofsky composes history. He reaches back to European traditions to ironworking (17) and tinsmithing (68) to illustrate the relationship between law and economic and social practices: "There were no legal restrictions as to their [forest's] use, as in England, when during Elizabeth's reign statutes prohibited not only the cutting down of trees, but the erection of ironworks in specified districts" (18). As an "idiosyncratic Marxist," he makes economic interpretations as well: He brings into

[29] He has the tendency to quote lists as well (30), as in a long advertisement for chalkware (59).

focus entrepreneurial forces (24), the feudalism of "iron plantations" (25), and of course labor relations (27). All of Zukofsky's Index work essentially allows objects to speak, but here it does so most literally, foreshadowing his imitation of Marx "A"-9:

> "Who is the potter, pray, and who the Pot?' It doesn't matter really [who] made us. The tradition is unbroken. If the Crolius and Remmey families are still remembered it is in the glaze, the blue floral brush work, in the incised painted blue and their bird motifs. O yes…we were made at different times, by different hands. Sometimes instead of an ear handle, there is none. Or instead of a gray glaze, there is a gray-brown glaze. (198)

The social history created by these details includes minorities and women, unlike most standard histories of the day: He notes that "In the North, many of the negroes were skilled blacksmiths" (27). He also pauses to consider the role of kitchen slaves in the plantation kitchen (97).

Because of his focus on particulars rather than generalizations about broad trends, Zukofsky is more interested in the quotidian lives of men and women than political events. For instance, he traces the routes of tin peddlers across the northern states (71-72). He also, again unusually for his time, considers the spouses of such merchants. In "American Kitchenware 1608-ca. 1875" he promotes the claim that kitchens "reflect the rise of the economy of self-sustaining households, the division of labor in the communal Amana and Shaker societies, and the growth of American industry and design as communication moved westward" (95). The American home grew up from single-room dwellings, so the "economy of the home found its entire setting in this one room" (95). He integrates into an extensive list the tasks of the housewife and the economy she participated in. The faith in details, in archives of historic particulars, to tell the story of social history is clearly presented in the Index: "The long list of articles, now housed in collections, forms an index of the detailed activities of the housewife" (98). The evidence of objects reminds Zukofsky of pre-industrial labor. Most of the objects "recall a time

when men were likely to be found working on something at home, and for their homes, side by side with their wives" (101):

> The objects of ironwork would multiply with the needs of the people and their increasing knowledge of working the metal. Given an unsettled landscape, they would try to order it, work the land and build on it. Having built houses, they would fashion iron to supply their daily demands. Once these were satisfied, increasing comforts would permit them the luxuries of decoration and playthings for their children, tho it is true that sensitive craftsmen would find even these luxuries a need from the beginning. (38-39)

Sherwood, following Ahearn's lead, detects in this passage the faint hint of Zukofsky's styling himself as a "sensitive craftsman" (39). That may be, but one need not equate Zukofsky with the figures in this passage to recognize that it compiles a set of objects used in quotidian life.

While these detailed essays were intended to provide the content of the project, the radio scripts were written to publicize the project. By the time of Zukofsky's second script, the series had been named "The Human Side of Art. " In one of his scripts, Zukofsky promotes the Index's mission in this way: "For old things are lost, destroyed, stored away in attics and cellars, sold—accumulate the dust of antique shops and museum cases. Only an enterprise like 'The Index of American Design' can bring them back to the people" (150). He says that the Index does not throw away such things as handbills but studies them (169). These items then exist not only as pictures in the encyclopedia, but "as facts. They still exist, because they existed. And because rendering the truths they were to the people who made and used them becomes part of the factual material of the artist's drawing" (150). The format of the show was a scripted conversation about a specific craft item between Zukofsky and an announcer, sometimes identified as Carl Miller (who is also credited as the director of the show), discussing the object's historical significance. The scripts are conversational, if a bit stilted to contemporary ears, and draw

on previous research by integrating passages from the longer essays by incorporating sources and topical verses. Both the script "American Tinsmiths" and the much longer essay "American Tin Ware" cite the applicable sources and contemporaneous verses. In the scripts, Zukofsky styles himself as an expert, answering the interviewer's questions about the craft or object. The shorter format and concentration on specific items leads to greater focus in the scripts. His script "A Pair of New York Water Pitchers" does in fact examine two silver pitchers, specifically the seals on them (161-8). Zukofsky begins by noting the general symbolism "in the act of drinking water, for the thirsty which at all times takes on the character of a sacrament" (161). But the pair he discusses bears an engraving that depicts the freeing of the slaves in New York State. Over the course of his investigations, Zukofsky compares the craftsman's ordeal of indentured servitude to slavery's hardships: "Having considered our manumission, silver-water-pitchers, and knowing now that the Continental money offered as reward for Paul Syre's return was in time not worth the trouble of trapping him, we hope that Paul Syre escaped to that freedom which his later namesake visualized for another race" (168).

He implicitly links craftwork and progressive causes—the water pitchers and the Wide Awake Lanterns (173-178) both reanimate the abolition movement. The close observation of objects can unveil specific details of another time—in the following passage Zukofsky moves from a description of the abolition-themed lanterns themselves to imagining their ceremonial lighting:

> For the *Wide Awakes*, like all the other groups of marching young men who were soon to fight a bitter civil war, assembled for the procession with all lights out. There they united in the night till at a given signal a cannon boomed. Only then as a contemporary newspaper account tells us, did "a grand conflagration of torches, lanterns and lamps bust forth in bewildering light." It is in all this light that we must imagine the *Wide Awake* lantern and eagle torch talked about today. (178)

Even though Zukofsky believed that his work for the Index stole time from his poetry, its governing mission—the creation of an archive of particulars, which can then animate a history based on those details—overlaps with the research and writing that he did for *"A"*.

After his time with the *Index* project, Zukofsky never again worked as a professional archivist. However, many of his endeavors used archival techniques and reflected his object-based epistemology. The two most substantial such projects were his own literary archive and *"A"*, which will be examined in following chapters. Two less prominent examples include a subset of his literary archive, a small collection of instructional materials that Zukofsky compiled to teach one of his classes at Brooklyn Polytechnic, and his poetry anthology *A Test of Poetry*, both of which incorporate his archival training into their composition.

According to Celia Zukofsky's "Year by Year Bibliography of the Works of Louis Zukofsky," Louis Zukofsky began work on *A Test of Poetry* in 1935 and completed it in 1940. That chronology shows that Zukofsky worked on compiling this poetry anthology at the same time that he was working on *The Index of American Design*. Zukofsky published it under the Objectivist Press imprint in 1948 and used it as a text in his Polytechnic classes. Because of its composition history, it cannot be said that he compiled this collection for the purpose of teaching, though this became its eventual use. It has received little critical comment, although perhaps its recent republication will change that. Al Filreis uses it as a stepping-off point for the problematic nature of Modernist literary history; Peter Middleton considers it as a context for Lorine Niedecker's contributions; Peter Quartermain finds parts of it represented in "A"-8 (a sort of anthology of an anthology); and Alan Golding mentions it in his history of American poetry anthologies. No one has inspected its structure at length nor the assumptions that

ground that structure. It is the one work of Zukofsky's which immediately springs to mind as curatorial: *A Test of Poetry* is a textbook-anthology which in effect "hangs" poems in "displays" of two to five poems, accompanied by minimal comment. Zukofsky's anthology superficially resembles Pound's *ABC of Reading*, an anthology organized in a manner influenced by Pound's visits to the British museum (see Paul 65-87), but it allows for a greater latitude of individual interpretation.

Any literary anthology might be thought to be an archive in an abstract sense—it selects and preserves documents for the future. If one pushed this line of thought to its logical conclusion, the technology of printing is a general analogue for archiving (this is the conclusion Derrida begins with), but considering the heteroclite nature of an anthology, with separate documents collected into a whole, makes it an exemplary analogue. That the selection of many poetry anthologies tends toward the timid, merely reprinting selected "greatest hits" from prior anthologies, is beside the point here. Zukofsky's selection is idiosyncratic—while he includes such famous poems as Shakespeare's Sonnet 116, he also includes obscure poems by forgotten seventeenth-century poets such as Francis Kynaston and some poems by chronically under-published contemporaries such as Niedecker and Bunting (not to mention one poem of his own, "Little Wrists"). Some of the now familiar poems (Marianne Moore's "Poetry" and Williams's "The Red Wheelbarrow") he selected had not yet made it into anthologies. This eclectic roster, along with his unusual practice of silently excerpting passages ("The hedge crickets/sing" is all we get of Keats's "To Autumn") foregrounds the very process of selection. As an anthologist, Zukofsky is a severe *archon*. His intention is not simply to present the best of what was thought and said, but to manipulate the available material (a vast corpus of verse both good and bad) for an instructive purpose. The most evident purpose is simply to teach his theory of poetry. He borrows, via Pound, Louis Agassiz's

scientific model for the imparting of a literary sensibility.[30] Like the nineteenth-century biologist's teaching method of comparing specimens to increase the knowledge of species, Zukofsky groups in "exhibits" two to five examples of some common poetic quality, and asks the reader to compare them. It is only in the second of three sections that Zukofsky actually explains what qualities might be extracted from the comparison. A table at the back of the book identifies the title, author, and date of each poem, and also names a "consideration" like "speech," "song," and "intellection" for each group. These "considerations" are elaborated in Part II of the anthology, the only editorial content in the book. But when consulting the table, it seems that the same consideration could apply to the equivalent exhibits in each part. The consideration "song" is discussed in relation to Chaucer's *Book of the Duchesse*, Villon's "Rondeau," and "O Western Wind," exhibits 9a, 9b, and 9c in Part II. The presentation of the table suggests (but does not mandate) that the idea of "song" might also be applied to Part I, exhibit 9a and 9b (other works by Villon and Chaucer) and Part III's 9 a-d (including Chaucer and Villon again). The reappearing authors support the visual impression of reading across the table horizontally, but nowhere in the text does Zukofsky either analyze the specimens in Parts I and III or explain how to use the table. He told L.S. Dembo in 1969 that

> I tried in *A Test of Poetry* to show what I meant by giving examples of different poets writing—colloquially, not philosophically speaking—on the same subject. People are free to construct whatever table they want, but if it's going to be art, you had better have some standards. I at least want a table that I can write on and put to whatever use a table usually has. (*Prepositions* 232)

[30] Pound cites Agassiz's injunction to his students to closely examine biological specimens at the beginning of *ABC of Reading*. Bernstein amply describes Agassiz's influence on Pound in *Tale of the Tribe*. From Agassiz, Pound learned that "[o]nly the scrupulous assemblage of concrete, observable details, the comparison and examination of specific minute features…can give rise to insights possessing a universal validity while remaining untainted by the abstraction and vagueness of all purely theoretical generalizations" (36).

His image of the reader here is someone hard at work comparing textual objects. A table is a sort of heuristic that a reader might use to aid in the comparative work of reading modeled by Zukofsky's *Test*. Although Zukofsky has enough confidence in the textual objects of his anthology to speak for themselves that he only provides commentary for a third of them, he nonetheless provides an arrangement that helps the reader see similarities and form judgments. The lack of interpretation in *A Test of Poety* demonstrates a confidence in his arrangement of textual objects to communicate Zukofsky's particular understanding of poetry.

Finally, I would like to consider the collection of annotated art reproductions Zukofsky created to prepare for one of his Polytechnic classes, a humanities survey. These documents provide evidence of Zukofsky's teaching practices, and also show how Zukofsky used the process of comparing objects—not only the cards but the architecture and paintings they represent—to impart an understanding of art history. This collection is housed in Zukofsky's archive at the HRC, but it has thus far escaped critical comment. The humanities survey for which it was compiled was one of the classes that Zukofsky routinely complained about in letters to Williams, Corman, Dahlberg, and others as siphoning off the creative energy he would prefer to apply to his poetry. Indeed, the breadth of the collection and the extensively detailed annotations shows that a great deal of work went into Zukofsky's class preparation. Marcella Booth's bibliography describes "10 cards (15.3 x 10.2 cm) written on both sides… 14 art reproductions (picture postcards and clippings from magazines and newspapers); and 208 reproductions (20.2 x 13.8 cm) in the University Prints, Boston series (113 having ANS on art)" (231). This description misses two other cards that list the required and optional reproductions for his classes. The University Prints is a Boston publisher that claims to offer a "visual archive" of art history (vii). The company published cheap reproductions of significant paintings,

sculpture, and architecture, allowing an instructor to select specific works rather than rely on a textbook editor's decisions. Zukofsky chose from several of the University Prints' different series: he picked a great number of samples from the European Architecture series and the Greek and Roman sculpture series, and a few from the pre-Greek, modern and American architecture, Early and Later Italian, and Oriental series. This large body of reference material is supplemented by a few museum postcards and newspaper and magazine clippings, but Zukofsky's annotations appear only on the University Prints. Of the one hundred thirteen cards that bear any notation at all, forty-six are heavily marked. These cards are filled with notes in ink and pencil, with Zukofsky's typically cramped handwriting crowding the margins and the back.[31] The annotations generally provide background history, listing important dates, and notes on the materials used for constructing the architecture. This is the same sort of information included in the surviving nineteen pages of lecture notes, written on Brooklyn Polytechnic registration cards, across a schedule grid on one side (the "10 cards" in Booth's description). The topic of this lecture is Gothic cathedrals, focusing on Chartres and including references to reproductions. The fact that this is the only such transcript suggests that he changed from this method of composed lecture to relying on notes on the cards themselves. Many cards, such as the one depicting the Roman floor mosaic "The Battle of Issus" (B 14) include historical notes in both pencil and different colored inks. These marks likely show that it was referred to and revised repeatedly. This simple move from composed lecture to marked-up documents is illuminating. It represents Zukofsky's method of composition by collecting discrete objects as opposed to creating synthesized narratives.

[31] Fielding Dawson described Zukofsky's handwriting as "tiny, the line…level, but the letters themselves have serifs that make it difficult to read" (104).

Although the scope of this chapter has been "extra-literary," I would like to show how this "visual archive" of art history affects Zukofsky's poem "4 Other Countries," published in the 1958 volume *Barely and Widely*. This volume of shorter poems was originally published in an edition of three hundred in a facsimile of Zukofsky's handwriting. The small print run and the physical appearance of the text suggest an intimacy between the reader and author, and the topic of "4 Other Countries," the family's 1957 trip to Europe, adds to this effect.[32] The poem has the air of living-room slide show, depicting scenes of the Zukofskys' travels in England, France, Italy, and Switzerland. Aside from Cid Corman's praise for this poem's musical quality, which "creates a world of poetry that is of such freshness as to make one wonder where poetry had been 'all this time,'" there has been no critical comment on this poem. It is a relatively straightforward travelogue with some wonderfully musical passages and postcard-like depictions of the sights the family saw. As the account of a summer-long tour, it is somewhat lengthy, though its two-hundred-twenty four-line stanzas are in themselves quite airy, since each line is composed of only one to four usually common words. I will examine this poem in some detail to provide a sort of cross-referencing to the art card collection. There is a limited amount of direct card-to-poem correspondence, perhaps because Zukofsky did not take notes on works he already knew well. That is to say, few of the art works that correspond to extensively annotated cards are referred to directly in Zukofsky's poem.[33]

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[32] This was Zukofsky's first trip abroad since visiting Pound in Rapallo in 1933. He recalls that trip in "4 Other Countries": "He/was at/via Marsala 12/an era gone" (179). Although there is a wealth of art from all eras available in New York City (and he seldom left the city of his birth), Zukofsky's closest contact with the works of art was the cards, and when he did come in contact with it on a family trip to Europe in 1957, he used the cards as a semantic frame for perceiving this culture.

[33] Perhaps the limited correspondence between the cards and any of Zukofsky's poetry accounts for the fact that this collection has not yet been mentioned in Zukofsky criticism. The first movement in this criticism has been, after all, the explication of obscure references. The University Prints are neither particularly obscure, nor do they add much indication of their subjects' special significance to Zukofsky.

One notable exception is the card for the Roman Forum. The University Prints card numbered G 80 bears the printed caption "The Forum Romanum, Rome/ Plan regularized by Julius Caesar/Buildings, I century B.C.—III Century A.D." Zukofsky adds some pencil annotations below the photo, listing the construction dates of specific Forum features, such as the Temple of Saturn (284 A.D.) and the Coliseum (80 A.D.). He more extensively marked the "plan of the Forum Romanum, Rome/General Layout," (G 81) indicating directions, noting the meaning of "forum" ("market/long narrow space hence place of public meeting"), cross-referencing a text on Roman history, and glossing the plan by drawing arrows between depictions and text that indicate such facts as the "rostra" is a "speaker's platform," the site in the center is the "First Forum," and so on. The Forum appears in "4 Other Countries" as well. The perspective from Ara Coeli, overlooking the Forum, which gives a view of

> The column of
> Trajan so
> small
> below (187)

From this vantage, he sees a wider range of Rome:

> Rome is a low
> city of shuttered houses
> with
> tawny or orange views
>
> Its older ruins
> so gentle
> they disappear (187)

These notes on the Forum almost act as glosses on the cards, adding missing perspective (another view) and context (spatial context to the rest of Rome and the "poetic" context of the disappearing ruins).

Though he never visited it, Zukofsky took copious notes on two cards of Saint Sophia's in Constantinople, cross-referenced with notes on history of Byzantine art, building materials, directions, notes on domes, even the height and diameter of the main dome. Notes on this impressive structure fill the margins of the card. One of these notes links St. Sophia to St. Front of Perigeux, a site he did visit. On the card, Zukofsky notes that many find the French church to be a shoddy imitation of the original in Constantinople (Istanbul). He carries this knowledge with him to France:

> The birds of
> Periguex
> sing back Gaul
> Roman and Jew
>
> Middle Ages slum
> merde at St. Front
> pedentive
> of Istanbul
>
> Arcades, bascilicas,
> chevets, the Tower
> of Vesone
> in honesty
>
> Warning
> *Stay away*
> *the wall*
> *crumbles* (174)

As when viewing the Forum, Zukofsky ends his account with an Ozymandiac warning of impermanence. But in this case, the art card gives us additional insight into this passage, in that it not only explains the reference to Istanbul but also explains the eye for structure in the third quoted stanza.

A number of other cards show an interest in structure or building material, perhaps appropriate since many of his students were engineers.[34] His Aqueduct notes identify that structure's building material as "uncemented limestone blocks" while his "Schematic of Rib Framework of Gothic quadripartite and sexpartite vaults" is marked with supplemental notes on historical uses of vaults and cross-references to cards depicting Roman vault construction and a cross-section of the Parthenon. He puts this knowledge to work in France as well:

> In germ
> the ribbed vault
> on a sarcophagus,
> also a tiny
>
> Fan vault—
> so proportioned
> as not to excite
> later doubts of lavishness.
>
> So the unribbed
> vault at
> San Vitale
> hints at the rib (190)

The poem demonstrates a knowledge of architectural detail throughout: of the Pantheon's dome's coffers or interior panels (188) or of Venice's Bell Tower

> whose windows
> run not down
>
> The center
> but along the side
> edge; the three
> gonfalon

[34] This interest in structure should not simply be attributed to a sense of service to his audience. In fact, Zukofsky's friend and correspondent Guy Davenport observes that Zukofsky "was fascinated with the shapes of the letter A (tetrahedon, gable, strut) and Z (cantilever), and designed all his poetry with an engineer's love of structure, of solidities, of harmony" (108).

Poles before
        St. Mark's Basilica
like votive candles (191)

It is notable that this is the sort of detail that Zukofsky tended to record on his cards, although most of the cards in the collection bear little or no marking. There are no notes on the architectural wonders of Venice or Florence, and few notes on any paintings at all. There are only occasional notes to Gothic architecture. This evidence could simply reflect a greater confidence in the material on Zukofsky's part.[35] Although Zukofsky made no notes on Venice, he displays extensive knowledge of it in "4 Countries."

Since the 1957 trip documented by "4 Other Countries" was Zukofsky's first time in Europe since his 1933 visit to Pound in Rapallo, most of his knowledge of its artistic and architectural heritage came from secondary sources. Over the years he developed not only the detailed knowledge reflected in the poem but the confidence to know that in Berne there's "No/architecture/to speak of" (196). However, in the poem there is an intense discovery of color, a dimension absent from the black and white reproductions. He saw

A lavender plough
        in Windermere
the French blue
        door

Of a gray
        stone
house in
        Angers (172)

not to mention "a garden of/purple and red" (172) or a

Red rose fall

[35] Compare for example the dearth of intertextual comments in his copy of Robert Frost's *Poems* for class Spring 1963—some are lines marked with a tick in the margin, there are some brief comments on tone or disagreements with editor Louis Untermeyer, but mostly this text is untouched: since poetry was his lifelong interest he probably simply did not feel the need to add comments.

in the small
arena's ruin
red briar (174)

This last image is particularly striking in this context, because it acts as a splash of color entering into the monochrome print of historical ruins.

Like Pound, Zukofsky integrated a great amount of past cultural achievement into his work. In fact, some passages in "4 Other Countries" seem to echo Pound. Zukofsky goes to the trouble to note some of Pound's particularly valued figures and places: Bernardino Luini, Bertran de Born, San Zeno of Verona, and Sirmio all appear in both Zukofsky's poem (and were encountered by the family on their trip) and in Pound's work. Zukofsky even seems to mimic Pound for the first time since the early movements of *"A"* with the line "the gold that shines / in the dark" echoing "In the gloom, the gold gathers the light against it" (See Jeffrey Twitchell-Waas's helpful "Z-Site" for these correspondences between Zukofsky's and Pound's European landscapes.)

Of the archives discussed in this chapter, this collection of cards best fits the strictest definitions of professional archivists, since the cards are documents which provide evidence of Zukofsky's work in an official capacity as humanities instructor. *The Index of American Design* and *A Test of Poetry* make stronger claims to the importance of the documents being preserved (be they poems or representations of craft objects). Moreover, each of these collections of textual objects resides in some form in Zukofsky's literary archive at the University of Texas. Zukofsky's methods show a great faith in the historical objects of archives to speak effectively to contemporary audiences. He repeats this formula in the creation of his literary archive, which used records of his earlier career to bolster his contemporary standing. All of Zukofsky's knowledge of archives comes to bear in the creation of this archive, the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 3

The Archive at Work

The preceding chapter examined Louis Zukofsky's archiving activity but only indirectly engaged the largest archiving project that Zukofsky ever undertook—the construction of his literary archive. Zukofsky's formal experience as an archivist—first at work for *The Index of American Design* and then in support of his work as a teacher—taught him not only that archives are useful organizing structures for gathering and interpreting disparate documents, but that assembling archives can do more than simply preserve the past. They can also speak to the present day. They can create new historical understandings, as the object-based *Index* does, or be used as educational resources, as his art cards and poetry anthology were. Given his familiarity with archives, it is not surprising that Zukofsky not only took an active role in developing his literary archive, but used it as an alternative form of advancing his languishing literary career. His predilection toward orderly record keeping, including the filing of correspondence and the dating of multiple drafts and work notes, certainly served a purpose in composing his works and relating with friends and associates. But beyond these quotidian (though vital) functions, his archive ultimately became a means for raising his literary profile. The narrator of Martha Cooley's novel *The Archivist* considers the separation between writer and archivist to be absolute: "An archivist serves the reader's desire. Yet what of the writer's—is it of no consequence?" (322). But in Zukofsky's case, the line between archivist and author is blurry, since he served as his own archivist and his writing projects were archives in themselves. (In my next chapter I will show that his masterwork *"A"* is a textual archive in itself.) Archiving supplemented his lagging publication and ultimately

brought this marginal poet into the domain of publishing and academic institutions.[36] Admittedly, this success was qualified and developed slowly, but creating institutional ties by means of his archive was one step in his return from obscurity to print and eventually into academic discourse.

While the Zukofsky archive held by the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin, which includes his working library, copies of his publications, his correspondence, and multiple drafts of and work notes on almost all his work, has been a frequent stop for Zukofsky scholars, the documents comprising it have been largely taken as a given, as a sort of natural resource to be exploited. But an archive is a created structure, reflecting personal desires. Derrida, among many other writers on archives, critiques the naivety of taking the documents of an archive as "pure" evidence and advises us to consider the constructed nature of an archive. An archival collection is as much a construction as the archival facility that houses it. The Zukofsky archive tells many stories beyond interpretive glosses or composition history or personal relationships. It not only tells the story of Zukofsky's late career and his rise to comparative prominence, but plays a role in that story. Establishing the archive was a value-increasing gambit, much like his earlier attempt at creating an Objectivist movement through the institution of publishing. Despite a personal archive's seemingly private nature, it enters

[36] A broad range of institutions has some bearing on the creation and dissemination of literature. Although I focus on publishing and the academy, one might consider, as Lawrence Rainey does in *Institutions of Modernism*, the various social activities that encourage patronage and thereby carve out an intermediary between the aesthetic realm and public culture. Rainey's survey of the uses of the term "institution" is instructive. His work strives to go beyond the "set[s] of protocols internal to literature or the profession [of] academic criticism" or vague intermediaries between art and society present in existing criticism (5-6). Given Zukofsky's coterie status (as the beneficiary of a small but ardent readership), the institutions most relevant to his work include the modest outposts of poetry publishing and academic activities, including, most relevantly, institutional archives. For an investigation of institutions and some of the poetic descendents of Zukofsky, see Hank Lazer's *Opposing Poetries*, which considers the intersection of Language-centered poetic practices and such institutional activities as poetry readings and anthology creation. Libbie Rifkin's *Career Moves* also examines the purposeful institutional alliances forged by such "outsider" poets as Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, Zukofsky, and Ted Berrigan.

into a relationship with the public when acquired by an institution such as the HRC. In a sense, it enters into an economy. Not only does a literary archive possess a monetary exchange value for its contents, as living authors usually receive cash payment for their papers, but it provides a means of establishing literary value as well. Literary archives have of course been valuable to critics, editors, and biographers, but Zukofsky's collection of manuscripts, letters, and personal effects was strategically employed by the poet as a sort of cultural capital to lever himself back into print, into academic discourse, and perhaps ultimately into the canon of American literature. In Zukofsky's case this exchange was literal—he traded his archive for the subsidized printing of Bottom: On Shakespeare. The initial value of his archive was based on its inclusion of letters from Williams and Pound, but in the more recent past has been studied by Zukofsky scholars.[37] By insinuating his archive into a prominent institution, which was at the time actively acquiring the archives of major Modernists, he created a means by which (and a location in which) to be studied. Although Hilary Jenkinson adds a corollary to his definition of "archive," that as functional documents they are "not drawn up in the interest or for the information of Posterity," (11) this corollary is immensely contestable in Zukofsky's case. To the self-archivist Zukofsky, a function of the archive was to construct himself, as a poet, for posterity.

But well before conveying his archive to the HRC, Zukofsky attempted more conventional methods for pursuing literary success. An overview of Zukofsky's career shows that he attempted, with varying degrees of effectiveness, many methods to achieve the relative success of his more well known friends Ezra Pound and William Carlos

[37] There are many indications in Zukofsky's correspondence that the HRC's main interest in the Zukofsky papers were these letters. One sign that shows Zukofsky's understanding of the value to his documents to the institutions, he writes a note identifying the hand of Williams on a public letter Zukofsky wrote regarding Pound's character and achievement.

Williams.[38] In the early stages of his career, Zukofsky found some success publishing poems in Poetry and in Pound's short-lived *Exile*, then guest editing the February 1931 Objectivist issue of *Poetry*. In that issue, Zukofsky more or less tries to recreate Pound's success with the 1913 "Imagiste" issue of the same journal. Zukofsky followed this ineffectual attempt at founding a literary movement with an attempt to become a publisher of what we now see as significant Modernist poets, with active participation first with TO, Publishers and then the Objectivist Press. Neither of those publishing ventures proved successful, so in the early 1940s he self-published his first books before entering a fallow period in his poetic career. The 1960s marked a significant return to print, with the publication of *Bottom*, followed by the first widely-available publication of *"A" 1-12* and *All*, his collected short poems, and fortified by increasingly regular appearances in *Poetry* (the site of his first brush with success) and in *Origin* and *The Black Mountain Review*, two journals associated with the so-called "New American" poets. Though Zukofsky had long been valued by a select group of readers, it was not until the 1960s that his writing became widely available to the reading public, despite nearly forty years of effort on Zukofsky's part.

His first effort came through the journal most closely associated with the rise of American Modernist poetry, *Poetry* of Chicago. At Pound's request, Harriet Monroe invited Zukofsky to edit the February 1931 issue, as a special issue on the so-called "Objectivists." This issue served as the public founding of the "Objectivist" poets, an overlooked but influential group of affiliated poets centered around a core of Zukofsky,

[38] To think of these avant-garde poets as successful or in "the mainstream" is a bit of an anachronism. Though Pound and Williams now seem the dominant voices of their era (along with Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens, and a few others), they certainly faced difficulty finding an audience. However, Pound consistently played a quite visible role in literary taste-making, promoting major poets through his association with *Poetry* and other means. During the thirties, he and Williams both found a reliable publisher in James Laughlin's *New Directions*, assuring they would stay in print for years to come as they built audiences and reputations. Zukofsky conspicuously lacked such alliances, despite concerted attempts to cultivate them.

Charles Reznikoff, Carl Rakosi, George Oppen, Lorine Niedecker, and Basil Bunting. The members of this group concede that as a movement "Objectivism" never truly coalesced, but "Objectivist" has become a convenient term for placing these poets in literary history. Regardless, this group has seldom been considered anything but marginal to the broader Modernist movement(s). Zukofsky claimed that the term "Objectivist" was invented to please Monroe, the editor of *Poetry*, so that she could use it to market the issue.[39] While naming the ostensible movement enabled discussion of the poetry, the special designation also created distance between the magazine and this special issue, and hence between its contents and typical unmarked "poetry." Monroe went so far to write a rebuttal to "Mr. Zukofsky and his February friends" in the March 1931 *Poetry*, in a short note headed "The Arrogance of Youth." She chastises Zukofsky, a "young exponent of a 'new movement'" for attempting to, with "one grand annihilating gesture," sweep "off the earth the proud procession of poets whom, in our blindness and ignorance, we had fondly dedicated to immortality" (329). What might, in Zukofsky's mind, have been the coalescing of a new movement was dismissed by an institutional gatekeeper, acting as if she was protecting the estate from looters. Monroe closes her response by offering "the glad hand to the iconoclasts," inviting this outsider movement into Poetry's stable as a sort of loyal opposition. She transforms Zukofsky's power play into a position of weakness. She unprophetically closes with the observation that the Ojectivisits "may be headed for a short life, but it should certainly be a merry one" (333). How wrong she was. The Objectivist poets had an unexpected renaissance in the late 1950s and the 1960s, but only after years of neglect and travail.

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[39] Later in life, Zukofsky remembered Monroe's request: "When I was a kid I started the Objectivist movement in poetry. There were a few poets who felt sympathetic towards each other and Harriet Monroe at the time insisted, we'd better have a title for it, call it something. I said, alright, if I can define it in an essay, and I used two words, *sincerity* and *objectification*. And I was sorry immediately. But it's gone down into the history books; they forgot the founder, thank heavens…"(*Prepositions* 170-71)

Although Zukofsky had some skepticism toward the notion of a movement as he prepared the issue, he did in fact coin a descriptive term ("Objectivist") based on specific principles ("sincerity" and "objectification"). Letters to Pound in 1931 show that the essay "Sincerity and Objectification with Reference to the Work of Charles Reznikoff" was already completed when he received the invitation to edit the issue, so it could not have been written to order as he later claimed. He insisted that the essays be included in the issue, despite Pound's suggestion and Monroe's offer to publish them later: "I repeat the Reznikoff article the thing for issue… not a question of Harriet using it in some other number—It's not a question of greed for print but of saying what I have to say without repeating, with generalities, credo etc applied to a particular case" (Ahearn, *Pound/Zukofsky* 70). Zukofsky included the essay not merely to honor a gifted friend, or to declare a new movement, but to describe the state of poetry (as he saw it) in a public forum. Doing so allowed him to inscribe a particular version of literary history in which he might figure prominently. The terms used for evaluating the highest achievement of poetry ("sincerity" and "objectification") are entwined with Zukofsky's poetry and criticism, and, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, serve as the basis for his object-based epistemology.

The essay "Sincerity and Objectification" appears immediately after "Program: 'Objectivists', 1931," in the back of the issue. The head note of "Program" defines "An Objective" in three contexts: "(Optics)—The lens bringing the rays from an object to a focus. (Military use)—that which is aimed at. (Use extended to poetry)—Desire for what is objectively perfect, inextricably the direction of historic and contemporary particulars" (268). The quasi-"military" objective is in these essays to capture the current stream of American poetry and write himself into it. Zukofsky creates a history leading directly to this particular anthology of new poetry, which describes a contemporary project. He

provides a definition of poetry that eliminates anything but "objective" poetry. He borrows an unattributed quotation from Pound to describe the non-Objectivist waste land: "[F]or nine reigns there was no literary production" (296). The February issue reveals a new reign of renewed poetic production already in progress.

Unfortunately for Zukofsky, the term "Objectivist" vanished from poetic discourse soon after he first coined it. A year after Monroe's response to her "February friends," Samuel Putnam's New Review published a "New Objectivism" issue, and the Zukofsky-edited *"Objectivist" Anthology* received but a handful of mixed reviews. Far from consolidating a poetic movement under the "Objectivist" banner, Zukofsky's efforts were ineffectual. His position as guest editor was temporary by definition, and not even his supporters Pound and Williams had anything close to the necessary influence to complete this redefinition of the poetic landscape. So the Objectivists turned to what Zukofsky called "the publishing racket." George Oppen and his wife Mary founded TO, Publishers, based in rural France, under Zukofsky's editorship. TO is little remembered today even in the footnotes of publishing history. It existed for less than two years and published only three volumes to little acclaim and negligible sales. But despite its slight contemporary and historical profile, the press arguably served as a model for one of the avatars of high Modernist literary publishing, James Laughlin's New Directions.[40]

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[40] I argue this position at greater length in "A Short History of TO, Publishers." As evidence, one might consider a note which Pound, Modernism's leading provocateur, scrawled in the margin of a 1934 letter to its eventual leading publisher, Laughlin, suggests as much: "Oppen's orig/ SOUND and decent plan was to print cheap/ and pay every author 100 bucks fer book to start with... on that line yr/ aunt really could strike a blow / service etc" (Gordon 26). Mary Oppen later noted a similarity between the publishers: "[A]t almost the same moment that George and I terminated TO Publishers, James Laughlin founded New Directions. Since then he has continued to publish fine books through the many years, and he deserves the credit for carrying the burden of running a business in the interest of publishing poetry" (131). By linking the demise of TO with the success of New Directions, Mary implies that Laughlin's credit is due to running the Objectivist model successfully, to successfully attend to the details of business in service of poetry. While direct influence is difficult to argue, TO is an example of balancing commercial and artistic concerns in the publishing of avant-garde poetry, a balance that Laughlin later perfected.

Returning to New York, the Oppens, Zukofsky, and their associates formed a publishing collective under the "Objectivist" banner. The Objectivist Press's first book was William Carlos Williams's *Collected Poems 1921-1931*. Williams's book was collectively funded. According to the financial records for their first publication (recorded on an index card in the Zukofsky archive), Williams contributed $250 to the expenses, and five other poets provided the rest of the $453.91 publication expenses. Under Oppen's pledge of $50, an indented line registers $23.91 credited to "TO." Apparently, this sum was the remaining capital of the failed press. So the Objectivist Press was a continuation of not only the personnel and project of TO, but also its capital. Yet the collective financing proved unsatisfactory, merely spreading losses from one book to writers of others. After the publication of Williams's poems, subsequent authors independently financed their own publications. The press published four more volumes, including George Oppen's first book, *Discrete Series*, and went out of business in 1934. Zukofsky briefly revived the imprint to issue *A Test of Poetry* in 1948.

For years after the demise of their publishing ventures, little was heard from any of the Objectivists. During this silence, characterized by Ron Silliman as "second-phase objectivism" or the fallow period between early publication and the return to print in the 1960s, the first formal configuration of Modernism as a literary movement occurred in the academy.[41] Pound and Williams rose to prominence (and Williams was given the opportunity to define "Objectivism" in his own terms, in the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*), but the rest faded from the landscape. Reznikoff returned to self-publishing, while Zukofsky had trouble finding an outlet. The first half of "A" was finally published by Cid Corman in Japan in 1959, but was not published in America for nearly

[41] Gerald Graff's *Professing Literature* discusses the gradual inclusion of contemporary and modern literature into English departments. The shift from historically- oriented scholarship to text-centered, New Critical criticism allowed the study of Modernism as a field to develop between the end of World War II and 1960. See Graff 195-208.

another decade. Hugh Kenner, in *A Homemade World*, explained this fallow period as resulting from the neglect of publishers and academics:

> The academy has consistently shunned [the Objectivists]. Though the Objectivists were college men, though Zukofsky spent many years at college teaching, and though the New Criticism of the 1940s tended to be first and last something practiced by teachers, though Ph. D. candidates with New Critical supervisors scratched on their hands and knees for dissertation subjects, the Objectivists remained unnoticed, unreprinted, till the late 1960s. That is because, when the university network was linking up after the war, and taste for the first time was being made in classrooms, the prime criterion of poetic excellence was tending to become teachability. (173)

In other words, the obscurity of the Objectivists represented an institutional failure. Because Objectivist poetry lacks what Kenner calls the "teachable" aspects of poetry (paradox, concrete imagery, and a certain obviousness of argument), "[p]oets who offered no handle for such apparatus to hang onto were simply ignored" (173). The quiet "second phase" of the Objectivists, marked by silence and neglect, was for some the result of personal decisions, but it was not so in Zukofsky's case. Oppen chose to concentrate on political action and Rakosi devoted himself to social work and psychiatry, but Zukofsky kept writing. A look at Celia Zukofsky's "Year by Year Bibliography of Louis Zukofsky" shows steady activity and pursuit of publication through his career. During this second phase, Zukofsky was pushed to the margins of literary circulation, locked out from mainstream publishing and with little prospect of academic study. With no forum in which to succeed, he sought creative alternatives. Ultimately Zukofsky's early association with Pound and Williams paid off—not merely from the tutelage in the craft of poetry that they provided, but by finally attracting institutional notice. In 1961the HRC arranged to publish his *Bottom: On Shakespeare* so that the University of Texas might acquire Zukofsky's coveted correspondence with the newly canonized Modernist

masters.[42] Though an outsider to the developing academic configurations of Modernism, Zukofsky's diligent correspondence and meticulous filing of it (he even added dates to letters when his correspondents neglected to) helped him fill his "objective" by finding a stable forum for his work and an apparatus for continued reading of it.

The establishing of the Zukofsky archive at the Humanities Research Center (now the Harry Ransom Center) at the University of Texas at Austin was a small part of the so-called "Ransom Revolution" of modern archival collections. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, University of Texas provost Harry Ransom pursued an ambitious program of acquiring the literary archives of twentieth-century authors.[43] According to Nicholas Basbanes's account, "crates filled with rare books and documents were arriving at the University of Texas campus in Austin so quickly that nobody knew where to put them, let alone say how soon any of the material would be catalogued or when it would be made available to scholars" (312). The exact scale of these acquisitions is not known for certain—some estimates have the University spending fifty million dollars on various purchases during the first fifteen years of the project. Ransom's deployment of the University's ample resources (derived from oil money) represented an attempt to overtake the prestigious collections of Ivy League universities. But since universities like Harvard and Yale had long before begun historically-oriented collections, Ransom chose to focus on twentieth century writers, including major figures like D.H. Lawrence and Samuel Beckett but also lesser-known figures like Zukofsky. Whereas other university collections were built around books, Ransom concentrated on authors' primary

[42] In fact, the University of Texas originally intended to publish a volume of that correspondence called *Letters to Louis Zukofsky 1923-1955* but could not acquire permission to reprint the Pound material. See Rifkin 102-107 for another account of the establishing of the Zukofsky archive.

[43] Although literature was the main focus of Ransom's acquisitions, the HRC also developed large collections concerned with photography, film, and many other categories of human creativity. This breadth of collecting remains to this day, as demonstrated by recent acquisitions of personal archives of authors Norman Mailer and Don DeLillo, film actor Robert DeNiro, and Watergate reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein.

documents, from work notes to manuscripts. Perhaps Zukofsky saw the opportunity to add his archive to the rapidly growing collection of modern authors at the University of Texas as a chance at a new beginning. He could enter this vast archive of Modern literature as an equal of Pound, Williams, and many other prominent Modernists whose papers were purchased by Ransom.[44]

The business transaction establishing the Zukofsky archive was one of many brokered by Lew David Feldman through his literary agency, The House of El Dieff (so-called after his initials, L.D.F.). Feldman, a flashy figure who dressed in furs and flourished a silver-tipped cane, was a major player in the building of the HRC collections, often buying and holding collections until Ransom raised the money to purchase them. The Zukofsky deal was modest in scale; in lieu of payment the HRC paid for the publication of *Bottom: On Shakespeare*. *Bottom* was published in 1963 by The Ark Press ("for Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas" and "Distributed by University of Texas Press," according to the title page) as a two-volume set. Zukofsky explains the arrangement in a postcard to Cid Corman in the Zukofsky archive (Box 18, file 4).[45] In his 1960-61correspondence with Corman, Zukofsky frequently related his frustration in finding a publisher for his lengthy manuscript of *Bottom*. Finding no luck among conventional publishers, he remained skeptical about Feldman's Texas connection up until his postcard to Corman dated April 27, 1961, which begins with an uncharacteristically manic exclamation ("Whew-roar!"—a combination of relief and

[44] There is evidence that Zukofsky sought to distance himself from other "Objectivist" poets. For its 1967 republication in *Prepositions*, he revised the essay "Sincerity and Objectification With Reference to the Work of Charles Reznikoff" to simply "Sincerity and Objectification," with no reference to Reznikoff in the essay. Charles Tomlinson tells of a rift between Oppen and Zukofsky developing over Oppen's relative ease in returning to print under the New Directions imprint.

[45] The archive includes other documents relevant to the publication of *Bottom*, such as Zukofsky's correspondence with Kim Taylor, Advisor to University Publications who also did the book design of *Bottom* for his Ark Press. This correspondence is much dryer and more professional than his accounts to Corman. In one letter, Zukofsky tries to exploit his relationship by finding publication of "A Coronal" in *The Texas Quarterly* (letter of March 21, 1963 Box 19 file 1).

exaltation) and relates the terms that Feldman had procured. In exchange for "the letters," Ark Press would publish and the University of Texas Press would distribute an edition of 1,040 copies (well outpacing the two-hundred copies Corman published of *"A" 1-12*). Zukofsky notes the outrageous clause in the contract for the dedication to be made out to Feldman. (The dedication of *Bottom* is unprecedented among Zukofsky's publications in that it is not to a family member but to Feldman, "who made it possible.") Zukofsky thought this arrangement looked "fool proof to an innocent guy who doesn't seek fortunes." This postcard was dated only two days after a letter to Corman describing a "wasted" Saturday afternoon with Feldman, who at that time had not been able to provide the distribution of the book. Zukofsky describes these "business" negotiations ironically, but he seems to have been a tough negotiator, demanding that Feldman either return the letters or obtain distribution.

Zukofsky began work on Bottom in 1947 (the same year he began teaching at Brooklyn Polytechnic) and finished it in 1960; it was his main writing project for this period, which represents a gap in the composition of "A". In recounting his own canon, Zukofsky referred to Bottom as the "B" of his personal "ABC" ("A" being represented by "A" and All, and "C" by his translations of Catullus). Bottom might be thought of as an archive itself simply for its sheer mass and paratactic arrangement of quotations of Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Wittgenstein's Tractatus, Henry Adams, and others. Gerard Malanga writes that "[t]he most impressive thing about the structure of Louis Zukofsky's Bottom: on Shakespeare is its substantiality…There is often beauty to it, but it is never ineffable." Zukofsky's premises in this work are straightforward enough: 1) that Shakespeare's works are a unity which should be read as "one work, sometimes poor, sometimes good, sometimes great, always regardless of time in which it was composed, and so, despite defects of quality, durable as one thing from 'itself never turning'" (13), and 2) that the

reader can deduce from this unity that "when reason and love are an identity of sight its clear and distinct knowledge can approach the sufficient realization of the intellect" (15), which is the theme of Shakespeare's unified work. He restates this claim memorably: "love: reason :: eyes: mind" (39 italics and spacing in original). The title of Bottom's first section quotes Sonnet 59: "O, that record could with a backward look, /Even of five hundred courses of the sun, / Show me your image in some antique book" (qtd in Bottom 14). In the context of archives, "record" is a synonym for "document." In the sonnet the word primarily means literally "sense," though the reference to an "antique book" clearly alludes to publishing.

In providing key quotations and brief glosses on the most important sources of Zukofsky's thought, Bottom serves as an apparatus to read Zukofsky's large and imposing corpus as much as Shakespeare's. This extensive citation is not, in Zukofsky's mind, mere erudition: "I never looked at it as erudition. These were the things I read, and I've probably read very little compared to most people. I don't consider myself a scholar. These are the things I've read, the things I've loved" (*Prepositions* 244). In other words, this archive of documents compiles personal records. In his interview with L.S. Dembo, Zukofsky said "*Bottom: On Shakespeare* was written to do away with all philosophy" (229) and "I was through with doing away with epistemology in *Bottom*" (242). Mark Scroggins takes the thesis of *Bottom* to be "a philosophical corollary to, and justification of, [Zukofsky's] own Objectivist poetics, as well as the modernist theories of poetry and language underwriting the poetics" (50). Scroggins finds at least two provocative avenues for future consideration of Bottom: to develop its philosophical theme of anti-skepticism and to follow its cues of juxtaposed fragments—a central Modernist poetic strategy—and read it as "an exemplary prosody or as a long poem of sorts" (87). The publication of Bottom therefore is not just the justification for two decades of work, but the public

testament of Zukofsky's philosophy—information useful to readers of his other complex works.

The name of the press that published *Bottom* suggests the unusual economic exchange between archives and publishing. The first word of "Ark Press" amusingly suggests the first syllable of "archives." The book itself, which represents some twenty years of writing and research, is stuffed full of a disjunctive mass of citations, and so acts as an archive itself. Yet the fact that this publication was the direct result of establishing the Zukofsky archive shows that it is indeed the publication of an "Archive Press." Zukofsky wisely saw that the institutional resources of the HRC could make possible the publication of his long and perplexing book, and so found an immediate value for his archive. The sheer length of *Bottom* (the two volumes come to over eight hundred pages) prohibited easy self-publication or small-press publication, and its unusual format (a collage of quotations in the first volume and the score to an original operatic setting of *Pericles* by Celia in the second) conspired against it finding a large enough audience for a commercial press. But Zukofsky was able to exploit institutional resources to find another outlet for his work. He may have expected more from the University than he was to receive: in a letter to HRC director Warren Roberts dated September 7, 1961, Zukofsky summarizes Bottom's complexity by explaining how it functions simultaneously as a long poem (tracing one theme in a "variety of its occurrences"), a work of skeptical philosophy, a work of prosody, and an autobiography (19.1). He tells the Director of the HRC that he is free to use this explanation, preferably restated in his own words, to promote the work. In this same file, another letter to Roberts, dated December 20, 1964, mentions an essay on his work by Brazilian poet Augusto de Campos that Zukofsky expects to receive by post. However, he expects that Texas, nearer Brazil, will receive it first. Both letters are written from the unlikely assumption that the

director of the HRC's massive acquisition project is personally tending the Zukofsky archive and promoting Zukofsky's work.

While most writers received cash compensation from the University of Texas, Zukofsky translated the economic value of his archive into publication. Yet he was also aware of the cash value of his archival documents. In Zukofsky's only novel, *Little*, a fictionalized version of his family discovers a summer cabin for sale on "Archives Lane" (35). The improbable name suggests that the exchange value of his archive was on Zukofsky's mind, that he had the notion that sale of his archive could provide him some valuable property. He tried to sell the typescript of Corman's printing of "A" 1-12 to Henry W. Wenning, a rare book dealer from New Haven, Connecticut. In the file containing the typescript (Box one, file twenty-three), there is also a letter from Wenning declining to purchase the typescript because it has "no corrections, no changes in your hand or any of the other things that go to give a ms interest and value." Wenning recommends that it should be included with the original manuscript and drafts.The letter is dated March 28, 1963, so that material had already been sold to University of Texas, as perhaps Wenning knew. Before sending it along to the HRC, Zukofsky added notes concerning this letter to the title page of the "A" 1-12 typescript. In red ink, Zukofsky notes that the manuscript was "[r]eturned… as per attached Henry W. Wenning's letter." The manuscript also bears an earlier descriptive note, perhaps for Wenning's benefit, that explains the use of the document and notes the textual changes in his hand. That Zukofsky added this explanation to the typescript seems to contradict Wenning's reason for declining the manuscript, as if Zukofsky had already learned that to make his archival material valuable, he ought to emphasize and even add evidence of his use of it. However, Wenning's refusal of it is a sign that Zukofsky still had little literary value beyond his connection to Pound and Williams.

Although Zukofsky clearly exploits his archive to advance his career, it is important to note that Zukofsky was not completely bereft of other institutional support. In addition to his professorship at Brooklyn Polytechnic, which provided a steady income though few creative opportunities, he had allies in the publishing world. Henry Rago, editor of *Poetry* from 1954-1968, admired Zukofsky and published his work regularly throughout the late 1950s and through the 1960s. Zukofsky also found an important ally in Corman, who first published "A" 1-12 as a book and published middle sections of "A" and translations of Catullus in his influential little magazine *Origin*. The second series of this magazine (1961-1964) featured work by Zukofsky in every issue. He may have also learned of the exchange value of archival material from Corman. The funding for *Origin* derived neither from sales (it was given away for the asking, much like copies of "A") or from an outside source, but from sales of the manuscripts and letters generated by the first series. Corman writes that the "[Charles] Olson letters were sold… to the University of Texas for $600," which he divided between the cash-strapped Olson and Origin. The journal created "an endless supply of letters and papers" which he sold to Indiana University, the University of Texas (which later bought a large file of Corman's Zukofsky letters), and later Kent State (Corman xxxii-xxxv). Zukofsky praises Corman's business acumen in a note dated March 24, 1961, specifically his ability to broker the deal without an agent. Soon after this, Zukofsky was able to exchange his papers for publication of Bottom.

Beginning in the late fifties and sixties, Zukofsky and his fellow Objectivists began to move back into print, finding a readership of poets, and inching modestly and slowly into academic discourse. There are many reasons for Zukofsky's resurgence. Apart from the publication of Bottom, the effects of the archive on Zukofsky's reputation were deferred until the collection could be catalogued and the HRC building opened in

1970. He was assisted by Corman's and Rago's editorial kindnesses as well as the evangelism of readers such as Robert Duncan, Robert Creeley, and Denise Levertov. Duncan and Creeley lauded Zukofsky in print and conversation, while Levertov, as poetry advisor for W.W. Norton, arranged for the publication of his collected short poems, All.[46] Academics finally began to take notice of the Objectivists as a group. At the University of Wisconsin in 1968, Oppen, Rakosi, Reznikoff, and Zukofsky were invited to the Madison campus individually for readings and interviews with professor L.S. Dembo, which were printed in the journal Contemporary Literature (edited by Dembo) the following year. (Ironically, Lorine Niedecker was not invited to participate, although the life-long resident of Black Hawk Island lived only some thirty miles away from Madison. She did attend the conference, as she came to see Zukofsky (Penberthy 99).) The partial rediscovery of and renewed interest in the "Objectivists" precipitated a gradual critical interest of the poets' work, but also solidified "Objectivist" as a critical category. Yet Zukofsky's return to book publication came after the establishing of his archive, so this fact shares a role in his resurgence along with his emerging literary alliances. I will now turn to the continuing effect of the archive on Zukofsky's literary standing. Again, I would like to emphasize that this too results from the strategic creation and deployment of the archive by Zukofsky himself.

Marcella Booth's *Catalogue of the Louis Zukofsky Manuscript Collection* describes the collection as it stood in 1969. Cathy Henderson supplemented Booth's catalogue in 1987 to include additional acquisitions from the Zukofskys and material provided by Carl Rakosi and the Niedecker estate as well as a selected bibliography of Zukofsky's working library. The Zukofsky collection held at the HRC includes rare

[46] As one example of younger poet's support, consider Robert Duncan's poem "After Reading Barely and Widely," which begins "will you give yourself airs / from that lute of Zukofsky?" Duncan's poetry was published by New Directions and was popular with an engaged young audience, so this gnomic question may have inspired the curiosity of many potential readers.

editions of all his works, multiple drafts of most of them, including dozens of unpublished works, and correspondence relating to their composition and publication. Booth calls it a

> valuable source for scholars not simply because of its size (all of Zukofsky's major works are represented by a series of manuscripts), but also because the papers are carefully crafted and heavily annotated. The poet's habit of listing sources, his numerous drafts, his tendency to revise in various shades of ink and pencil, dating each revision, all enable the critic to read in graphic form the progress of a life's work. ("The Zukofsky Papers" 394)

Booth goes on to quote evidence of Zukofsky's consciousness of his papers in *"A":* "Much of it in pencil—blurred—other/ notes written over it. / I can't read back thru the years" (251). This quotation is telling—it suggests the massive potential for bibliographic work that the collection represents (according to Booth, the "60 years of life and letters stuffed into cardboard boxes…[could] keep critics of poetry busy well into the next century" (394)) while admitting the frustrating illegibility of Zukofsky's hand.[47] Booth's comments identify aspects of Zukofsky's archive that seem especially crafted to appeal to readers. If the act of writing, as depicted in the quotation from *"A"*, could not find readers through conventional means, he might find them through the institutional auspices of the archive.

As Libbie Rifkin describes the first fond of the Zukofsky archive, it is clear that Zukofsky intended it as public representation more than simply a cache of personal papers:

> The first submission to the archive includes a blurb page compiled and typed by Celia. The sheet contains excerpts from favorable notices on Zukofsky ranging

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[47] Zukofsky's handwriting is crabbed and minute, and his tendency of writing with pencil renders much of the manuscript collection, especially earlier items, difficult to decipher, if not completely illegible. However, subsequent markings on manuscripts, often in red or pink ink, show that sometime after the initial 1961 fond, Zukofsky began to see the archive as an alternative forum and so employed a more permanent inscription tools.

> from a review of *Some Time* in *Poetry* magazine, to a (curt but positive) letter from Pound, to what appears to be a letter in praise of Zukofsky from [Cid] Corman to Williams. Also submitted with the manuscripts for sale was a 154-item bibliography of Zukofsky's printed work, a list of his public readings—including lists of poetry read—and an extraordinary 201-item list of references to Zukofsky, with asterisks marking especially favorable notices. (105)

With this page of blurbs, a preliminary bibliography of secondary sources on his own work, Zukofsky had begun the academic work on his own poetry. A more condensed version of this page was sent to Cid Corman in 1959, with an explanatory letter that it was intended to support another "campaign," apparently to help get his work into print. The page of previously published quotations from Kenneth Rexroth, Marianne Moore, Williams, Robert Duncan, Robert Creeley, Corman himself, and a number of reviewers ends with a note to send inquiries to his Brooklyn address, in care of Celia. By radically expanding this bibliography, Zukofsky (with Celia's help) (re)writes himself into literary circulation by emphasizing connections with the established figures of Modernism and his currency in literary discourse.

An examination of the archive shows that Zukofsky was trying to do more than simply arrange for the publication of Bottom, or even influence the reception of his work simply by trading on his relationship with Pound and Williams. The archive also extends the work of his poetry. Derrida's definition of "archive" in Archive Fever is broad enough to include not only traditional archives and museums, but also printing (the chief object of analysis is Freud's published work) and any other means of inscription.[48] Derrida considers writing and archiving to be identical activities, and so incorporates many of his ideas about language, citation, and signification into what is ostensibly a discussion of Freud's archives in Vienna. Post-structuralism aside, Derrida's equation of archives and other forms of inscription is instructive. For Zukofsky, writing and

[48] To him, there is "nothing less reliable, nothing less clear today than the word 'archive'" (90),

publishing are both closely entwined with archiving. Like archives, writing and publishing are methods for preserving memory, for creating understandings of a moment in history.[49] From an archivist's point of view, a document, after its immediate usefulness has passed, must either be preserved or destroyed, and if preserved, must somehow be protected. Similarly, publication, by extending his work into the public realm, served Zukofsky as such a method of preservation and protection. After limited early success, he struggled for much of the rest of his long career to see his work into print. His participation in the Objectivist Press showed a commitment to publishing what its standard jacket copy called "work which ought to be read." Though the press published little of his own work, we can see that he nonetheless felt he "ought to be read" from the extraordinary efforts he made, often financing his own publication out of his modest means. By publishing, he offered to the public a sort of archive of his work. His success in publishing was modest, but by infiltrating the HRC, he was able to shift his attention to a new audience—in addition to his small contemporary audience, he had the opportunity to engage future readers.

Like *"A"* itself, Zukofsky's archive is a collection of personal documents presented to an outside world. Unlike the long poem, this collection is housed within an institution that encourages (or at least permits) its study—the HRC. The archive has become an almost necessary corollary to *"A"* for Zukofsky scholars. Despite commendable efforts based on texts alone—notably the early criticism of Guy Davenport, Hugh Kenner, and Kenneth Cox—the hermetic nature of Zukofsky's texts tends to flummox critics and other readers. But since Barry Ahearn's *Zukofsky's "A",* the first large-scale work on the subject, much of the writing on Zukofsky has made recourse

[49] Derrida capitalizes on the coincidence of the Freud archive being in his former home to make a connection between archives and both institutional and personal memory: "the archive takes the place of originary and structural breakdown of said memory" (11).

to the archive. To illustrate this aspect of the archive's value, I will describe two important works of Zukofsky criticism which rely heavily on the archive: Ahearn's guide to *"A"* and Michelle Leggott's *Reading Zukofsky's 80 Flowers*. Ahearn's and Leggott's work belongs to a small but growing body of distinguished Zukofsky criticism, along with more recent books such as Tim Woods's *Poetics of the Limit* and Mark Scroggins's *Louis Zukofsky and the Poetry of Knowledge*. More such work might one day institute a Zukofsky "industry" similar to that of more prominent difficult Modernists, like Pound and Joyce.[50]

Ahearn's important book makes extensive use of the archive. For instance, its discussion of the "ur-plan" of *"A"* shows the long poem's initial design and its early correspondences with Zukofsky's first significant poem, "Poem beginning 'The.'" This "ur-plan" dates from 1928 and represents Zukofsky's earliest plans for *"A"*. Even if these faded scraps of paper—probably once a single sheet of note paper but now creased and decayed into three pieces—had not been identified previously by cataloguer Marcella Booth, Ahearn's meticulous scholarship most likely would have uncovered them. On the reverse of the ur-plan, Ahearn finds some early version of lines to "A"-8, which he uses to hone in on the central theme of that movement, just as he uses a letter to Niedecker, also in the HRC archive, to identify the elements of its fugue-like structure (78). The pencil marks on these earliest workings of *"A"* are quite faded and part of item a has worn away altogether. Many of the notes are blurred and illegible, but they do demonstrate that Zukofsky had a full twenty-four-part structure in mind when he began the poem. We see that the Virgin Mary was to play a major role, literally and through puns on her name in "A"-6-9, that the interlocutor of "A"-2, Kay, was intended to return

[50] Bob Perelman grapples with the phantom category of the "Zukofskian" in *The Trouble With Genius*. Scroggins's forthcoming critical biography will no doubt further stimulate interest in Zukofsky, an interest that seems to be sprouting up unexpectedly. The organizers of the 2004 Zukofsky Centennial Conference at Columbia University expected seventy or eighty attendees, but three hundred people turned up.

in “A”-12, and other early figure like Bach, Yeohash, and Richard the Lion-Hearted were to return later as well. The poem was to end with a debate between the definitive pronoun “The” and the indefinite “A”. A jumble of notes show some interests that persisted through the composition of the poem, such as the imagery of horses and the philosophy of Spinoza, and also some that fell away, such as *The Cantos* and the apocalypse. But apart from this important information about the initial plan of *“A”*, this item provides evidence of Zukofsky’s self-archiving. Not content to rely on the diligence of future researchers, Zukofsky himself signaled this fragmented document’s importance when he shipped it to Texas. Each of the three fragments was mounted on polystyrene supports and wrapped in plastic; dates are noted (1928-1930) and each of the three fragments is labeled in red ink as notes and outlines for *“A”*. For good measure, he even signed the fragments, as if to testify to their provenance and authenticity.

Ahearn’s use of archival material actually decreases as his guide progresses toward the end of the poem, which is where Leggott’s book picks up. Though the title of *Reading Zukofsky’s 80 Flowers* indicates its primary topic as Zukofsky’s last collection of poems, Leggott begins with a detailed explication of “A”-22 and “A”-23, which Zukofsky worked on at the same time as he was beginning *80 Flowers*. These late poems are perhaps the most challenging of the Zukofsky corpus, and the relevant documents in the archive are likewise dense. These documents include a set of loose leaves and clippings, which Zukofsky carried with him in his black notebook, and drafts which were kept in a set of three spiral notebooks. He made daily notes in the black notebook and also filed clippings of interest therein. Zukofsky would later transcribe material from the black notebook to the spiral notebooks, adding new material as he wrote. His manuscripts always include clearly designated bio-bibliographical data, and here, as usual, Zukofsky notes on the front cover where he lived and visited as he worked on the poem (Leggott 4-

11). Leggott's use of these materials allows her to penetrate the obscure references in Zukofsky's "textbook of histories" in "A"-23 and the even denser obscurity of 80 Flowers, a sort of botanicum of eighty poems representing eighty flowers from his and Celia's garden. Through careful inspection of Zukofsky's drafts, Leggott is able to identify such arcana as single-word allusions to Henry James. Leggott is perhaps the scholar most dedicated to the potential of interpreting Zukofsky through his archive.[51] She goes so far as to claim that the difficulty of the late movements of "A" would be insurmountable for readers without recourse to Zukofsky's notes. According to Leggott, Zukofsky chose to

> legitimize use of the draft material by housing it in a public collection. He knew that all the manuscripts he cared to preserve would find a home in the Texas archive. The black notebook was already there; there can be little doubt that the *"A" 22 & 23* spirals and the *80 Flowers* materials were headed in the same direction—when the poet felt ready to release them. Texas was in effect written into the history of the work; Texas was an ultimate insurance against the black holes of neglect into which the very difficult too readily falls. (32)

Leggott here claims that the long-sought institutional affiliation permitted a stylistic transformation. Zukofsky was able to integrate an even deeper level of obscurity and difficulty, confident that devoted readers could in the future consult his clearly labeled, well-organized documents. Zukofsky did heavily annotate his materials, even number-coding clippings to movements. The original function of this annotation was no doubt to help Zukofsky assemble this dense poetry out of myriad sources, but after entering the archive it came to serve the purpose of aiding future readers.

While some literary scholars tend to accept literary archives as useful but uncomplicated tools, they are in fact constructed and controlled. Perhaps the most well

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[51] This position is evident from the first words of the book: "It is all there…" Ostensibly, the pronoun refers to the "complete record of the composition and publication of *80 Flowers*" but this reader also gets the impression that Legott means to imply that the key to all of Zukofsky's exegetical mysteries resides in the archive.

known case of authorial control of archives to shape reception is James Joyce's loan of his famous schemas for *Ulysses* to Stuart Gilbert. Joyce purportedly created these maps of correspondences to aid in the composition of his novel, but in loaning them to a sympathetic (if not sycophantic) critic, they became a tool for reading it. Joyce himself created the "Joyce industry" with this act and so underwrote early discussion of his novel. Zukofsky's archive is full of similar material. Zukofsky's archives are doubly constructed—first created, selected, and submitted by the poet and then organized and catalogued by professional archivists—and doubly controlled, by the HRC and Zukofsky's representatives. Louis Zukofsky himself supplied a steady stream of material during the last decade of his life, while his wife Celia Zukofsky provided later materials after his death. Since Celia's death in 1984, Paul Zukofsky, the only child of Louis and Celia, has served as what Derrida would call the archon of the archive. (An archon, as the reader will recall, is the powerful figure who oversees the archive.) In Paul Zukofsky's case, this guardianship includes strict control over the use of the archival material. While most of the archive itself is open to any scholar approved by the HRC (though one item in the archive, Jenny Penberthy's dissertation on the correspondence of Zukofsky and Niedecker, is restricted), permission to quote the material is subject to Paul Zukofsky's approval. This is his legal right and some might think his filial duty (should he act to protect the memory of his father from misinterpretations or distortions of interpreters). However, the fact that a single individual controls the use of the archival material—or more accurately, the fact that this individual chooses to exercise that control—inevitably affects the nature of Zukofsky criticism. Two examples of how Paul Zukofsky's control has affected scholarship include Peter Quartermain's *Disjunctive Poetics*, which includes a succession of footnotes reading "Permission to reprint denied by Paul Zukofsky," and Libbie Rifkin's *Career Moves*, which includes a chapter on the Zukofsky archive that

refrains from directly quoting any material from that archive, adeptly employing paraphrase instead.

However, Paul Zukofsky does encourage certain uses of the archive. In the recent Chicago Review special issue on Zukofsky, he writes a proposal for expanded study of his father's marginalia. As I noted, much of Zukofsky's personal library resides in the HRC, much of it bearing marginal notation in Zukofsky's hand. Paul Zukofsky's proposal is in essence a call for a criticism that would embed Zukofsky in the "great tradition" of his library—linking him to his canonical sources: Paul Zukofsky writes, "Much Henry James is marked, as well as works by Hardy, minor Greek poets, etc., and yet, if you read Zukofsky scholarship, little of this is mentioned, nor is the pertinence discussed, nor have these markings been tied into specific works or passages from my father's writings" (101).[52] Paul Zukofsky's brief note on his father's marginalia includes a vision of how the archive might be used. Paul Zukofsky proposes publishing the marginalia on the Internet ("with very strong copyright protection") to serve as "the grist, or perhaps even sketches, towards a yet to be written compendium" (102). His rationale for such an intertextual approach is compelling: "No one can read LZ without being aware how integral to his work is a poetics of quotation, of incorporation, of reading and re-reading, of reworking, of revitalization, of insistence upon the simultaneity of all literature" (102). A coordinated effort between a marginalia transcription project and an online readers' guide in the model of Jeffrey Twitchell-Waas's *Z-Site* would after time illuminate some of the great number of shadowy passages in Zukofsky's work. It would represent the culmination of Zukofsky's afterlife among the institutions, bringing (online) publishing, scholarship, and archives together in support of his work. Unfortunately,

[52] Paul Zukofsky tells us that the movement to transcribe Zukofsky's marginalia was begun by his mother, who proposed publishing a transcription of her husband's marginalia on poems of Hardy and Dryden and on Butler's *Way of All Flesh* (101).

Twitchell-Waas is based in Singapore, and no scholars in residence at the University of Texas have yet taken up the considerable challenge of transcribing the marginalia.[53]

Rifkin's discussion of Zukofsky in her book *Career Moves* considers the "process of transposition and recycling" present in much of Zukofsky's work, which is put into practice in "the production of the Zukofsky collection at the University of Texas and in his critical reception" (76). Rifkin ultimately joins with Leggott in thinking that Zukofsky used his archive as a sort of Rosetta Stone for his later, more difficult works, though she adumbrates Leggott's explanation by conjecturing that "[t]he practice of building the collection—in its tangential relation to market dynamics, its closed system of exchange, and its intent to produce a synchronic 'system of objects' out of the noisy diachrony of a life" seem "peculiarly Zukofskyian" (106). Yet the archive is not simply a "closed system of exchange"—it participates in a wider literary economy. The archive became the stage for developing value—not merely as exchange value, as represented by the publication of Bottom, but in establishing literary value.

Just as Zukofsky allowed the objects in the Index of American Design to tell historical stories, he crafted a personal archive that would tell the story of a poet committed to the highest aspirations of difficult work. The archivist Terry Cook argues that

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[53] Alhough the marginalia project alone has enough facets to engage numerous scholars, the archive provides many more opportunities for future Zukofskians. While all of Zukofsky's major works are in print, the state of the text is dubious in several cases. Errors introduced by Japanese typesetters into the text of *"A" 1-12* persist to this day, so a new critical edition of the poem would be valuable. Many items in the Zukofsky archive might have productive lives as publications, such as *The First Half of "A"-9* (discussed in my final chapter) and Niedecker's collage of Zukofsky's letters. More conventional volumes of letters might be assembled as well. The Pound-Zukofsky letters and Williams-Zukofsky letters might be supplemented with a collection of his correspondence with Cid Corman. Another volume of letters between Zukofsky and his younger acolytes like Duncan and Creeley would also be valuable. This volume might include correspondence with Guy Davenport or Hugh Kenner, which would be easily integrated considering that Davenport's and Kenner's papers also reside in the HRC. Unfortunately, all of these projects require sufficient interest and commitment of scholars, to say nothing of the approval of the Zukofsky estate.

> Documents, individually and collectively, are all a form of narration… that go well beyond being mere evidence of transactions and facts. Documents are shaped to reinforce narrative consistency and conceptual harmony for the author, thereby enhancing position, ego, and power, all the while conforming to acceptable organization norms, rhetorical patterns, and societal expectations. (25-26)

Cook goes on to note that in a "postmodern" archive "there is not one narrative in a series or collection of records, but many narratives, many stories, serving many purposes for many audiences, across time and space. Documents are thus dynamic, not static. And the archivist as much as the creator or researcher is one of the narrators" (26). Since Zukofsky acted as both creator of the documents and as self-archivist, he used the archive to make an argument about—to tell a story about—his literary standing. Other stories can be discovered in the archive, including that of its own founding. But although multiple stories can be found in archives, the process of selection and technique of preservation obscures others. For instance, consider the decimated letters of Zukofsky to Niedecker, which have been cut and mounted to create a statement of poetics at the cost of destroying evidence of the poets' personal relationship.[54] Zukofsky bibliographer Marcella Booth describes the Niedecker file as "so mutilated that it is virtually impossible to judge where one letter ends and another begins" (242). Some letters survive unharmed, though some of those whole letters include marked passages that were never clipped. Niedecker cut the great majority of correspondence she received from Zukofsky into pieces, numbering the fragments and pasting them on clean paper. These pasted up documents, which arrange numbered sets of quotations, seem to be in preparation for publication. Niedecker's technique in composing these pages suggest a faith shared by Zukofsky in juxtaposed textual objects to speak for themselves. One page, under a

[54] This particular act of archival violence was perpetrated by Niedecker. The relationship between Zukofsky and Niedecker has likely been a significant factor in the restrictions Paul Zukofsky has put on his father's archives. Rather than descend into gossip and speculation, I will leave the nature of the Zukofsky/Niedecker relationship to biographers.

heading referring to the publication of *A Test of Poetry*, consists of three clippings: an unnumbered note on the lackluster sales of *A Test*, a fragment numbered 234 that relates a visit of Williams to the Polytechnic campus, and a clipping numbered 235 which quotes a poem of Williams and ends with a salty anecdote. This combination suggests the friends' commitment to poetry, support for one another, and integration of it in their lives through three objective passages. In creating these collages, much of the letters' content has been discarded, and the remaining fragments have all been removed from context. Some of these pieces have fallen off of the mounting paper, but on those still attached the back of the quoted passage is unreadable, further limiting the accessible information of the letters. The resulting collage curiously parallels *"A"* in its incorporation of Zukofsky's material register of his daily life, its tracking of young Paul's witticisms and musical performances, and its recurring statements of object-based poetics. Niedecker's selective archive of Zukofsky's correspondence suggests the activity that led to the creation of Zukofsky's archival long poem, to which we turn next.

Chapter 4

"A" Is for "Archive"

Although Louis Zukofsky began work on *"A"* in 1928, the first widely available book publication of any part of the poem appeared as *"A" 1-12* in 1967. In that volume's front-matter, Zukofsky describes *"A"* as a

> poem of a life
> -and a time. The poem will continue
> thru 24 movements, its last words still
> to be lived...

This description identifies the poem's aspiration to achieve a predetermined twenty-four part structure (perhaps in imitation of the twenty-four books of the Homeric epic, or perhaps in tribute to the twenty-four letters of the Hebrew alphabet), yet also accounts for a planned indeterminacy. As a poem that records an individual life and the events of the world that occur during that life, it cannot be held accountable to overly precise pre-established rules—the "last words" are "still / to be lived." According to Zukofsky, "Each writer writes / one long work whose beat he cannot / entirely be aware of" (*"A"* 214). But if the writer of *"A"* is only partially aware of the intricacies of *"A"*'s "beat," then the reader is at an even greater disadvantage. *"A"* can be a mystifying work, one that neither its author nor critics have been able to grapple with comprehensively. Barry Ahearn's study is an important opening move in approaching Zukofsky's long poem, and has been impressively followed by the work of Mark Scroggins, Michelle Leggott, Tim Woods and others, but it might be that the project of Zukofsky criticism is vexed from the beginning. Ron Silliman's review of Ahearn's study complains that the problem facing Zukofsky's text

> is that criticism, not Ahearn, is still unready… to read a poem begun over 55 years ago. Criticism is an industry. As opposed to thought. The ultimate demand to seek a predominantly thematic or referential unity, the first order of all Anglo-American criticism, capsizes in the face of a work such as *"A"*. (144)

"A" is a multi-varied structure that at once invites and resists many interpretive strategies. It is what Richard Strier calls a "resistant structure," which can never be subjected to fully explanatory readings.[55]

The seed of this dissertation was a question that is deceptively simple to phrase: "How does one read *"A"*?" In other words, what reading practices could lead to a satisfying reading of this vast and hermetic poem? As Silliman notes, *"A"* resists unified methods of interpretation. Yet while conducting research in the Zukofsky archive, I became struck by the similarity between the poem and the archive that, in part, documents its creation. The Zukofsky archive includes boxes full of documents, many of which are mysterious or partially illegible, that in one way or another show Zukofsky's engagement with his work. These documents are not organized into a hierarchy of topics, but are arranged in files grouped by the work that one man was doing at a particular time in history. Many of these documents are inconsequential or indecipherable on their own, yet, when brought into relation with other documents, illuminate Zukofsky's personal life, poetic practices, and interactions with the world at large.[56] *"A"* similarly collects such documents. While passages of the poem remain frustratingly elusive even after

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[55] Strier's describes these "structures of and in particular texts that produce 'bafflement,' that surprise or puzzle the reader on a large or small scale, and that in some sense resist assimilation to totalizing interpretive strategies or methods" (7).

[56] Although I will continue to refer to archival documents held in the HRC collection, my primary concern in this chapter will be to test the validity of the archive as a conceptual frame. Other scholarship makes more direct use of the Zukofsky archive: as stated in the previous chapter, Ahearn's *Zukofsky's* "A": *An Introduction* and Leggott's *Reading Zukofsky's 80 Flowers* are exemplary works of this type. However, as I have said, I mean to treat the archive in this chapter less as a resource to be mined than as a model for interpretation—in other words, the bits of data that one discovers in reading Zukofsky's composition notebooks (i.e., citations and obscure references) can unlock local meaning, but understanding archives reveals the structure of the whole poem to be an arrangement of personal and public documents. Nevertheless, I will make reference to documents of the Zukofsky archive as they demonstrate composition technique.

many readings, thinking of *"A"* as an archive of one man's life allows the reader to hear the work "in its recurrence" (*"A"*806). While the meaning of one "document" contained in the poem may seem trivial or resist interpretation, they collectively provide evidence of Zukofsky's ongoing engagement with his world. In saying, as in my tongue-in-cheek title, that "*"A"* is for 'archives,'" I do not intend to offer a single "skeleton key" to the poem. Rather, I offer a set of interpretive strategies that might help us approach Zukofsky's imposing "poem of a life."

I have gone to some length to demonstrate Zukofsky's archiving temperament. In the previous two chapters, I have shown how Zukofsky worked as an archivist in a number of modes. His archiving tendencies culminate in the comprehensive archive of his papers and books at the HRC. Based on this evidence, there is little doubt that Louis Zukofsky was an active and strategic archivist. To Zukofsky, the archive was not only a pragmatic tool for preserving and promoting his work, but an amenable structure for organizing his life and, therefore, his poem. *"A"* also reflects these archiving practices in its manner of collecting the documents of one individual's life, and in its aspiration to construct meaning out of those discrete textual objects. The heteroclite nature of *"A"* is unified by the idea of provenance, or the chain of possession of documents. The very concept of the archive depends on the unity of provenance. Simply put, an archive is the store of documents saved by a specific individual or organization. Hilary Jenkinson, cited in the first chapter as a founder of modern archival discourse, defines archives as "[d]ocuments accumulated by a natural process in the course of the conduct of Affairs of any kind, Public or Private, at any date; and preserved thereafter for reference, in their own Custody, by persons responsible for the affairs in question or their successors" (11). The qualifier, "in their own Custody," emphasizes the importance of possession to constituting the archive. What makes an item eligible for inclusion in a given archive is

that it once belonged to the given individual or organization. The Zukofsky archive includes not only drafts that Zukofsky created himself, but papers and books that he owned. The only necessary commonality of the contents of an archive is a shared provenance—the documents must have been in the possession of a specific individual or organization. *"A"*, in effect twenty-four empty rooms of an archive, was slowly filled with records of the Zukofskys' quotidian life, reading, and observation of contemporary society. Anything that came across Zukofsky's desk became a candidate for inclusion in the textual archive. Marjorie Perloff observes that

> Zukofsky thus carries further Pound's program for a poem including history, a poem that no longer privileges the lyric over, say, the found object (actual letter received, newspaper passage, document), a poem in which the single startling epiphany gives way to collage, which is to say to the juxtaposition of disparate materials without commitment to explicit syntactical relations between elements and without a consistent authorial voice as ordering principle. ("Grandchildren" 216)

In lieu of the "consistent authorial voice" as "ordering principle" there is the selectivity of the archivist. The art of the archivist-poet is not in creating records of his world as much as selecting and arranging existing documents.

Like any archive, *"A"* exemplifies the concept of "object-based epistemology." As discussed in chapter two, an object-based epistemology demonstrates the belief that objects gathered in paratactic arrangements can tell stories or impart knowledge of the world. *"A"* is just such an arrangement; it is what Peter Quartermain calls a "material register" of "the particulars of the physical world" (6). Zukofsky expresses this "material register" as the collecting of "found objects…which arrange themselves as it were, one object near another" (*Prepositions* 168). Zukofsky presents his long poem as a set of structures to be investigated, to be moved through by the reader. The long poem archives a selection of the "contemporary and historic particulars" that came into Zukofsky's life.

These particulars are not connected by discursive tissue but are juxtaposed as objects. Parataxis, the syntax of the archive, is found throughout *"A"*. Zukofsky at one point refers to "three piers mist / sheaved waistlines reflected one and one and one" (402).[57] This series of "one and one and one" not only describes the three piers and metaphorically his close-knit, three-person family, but also Zukofsky's manner of piecing together elements in successions of "one and one and one."

Zukofsky's interest in collecting and arranging particulars comes to focus in one of the first appreciations of *The Cantos*, which he wrote in 1929, near the beginning of his work on *"A"*. Zukofsky found characteristics in Pound that he adapted for *"A"*. Zukofsky praises the "immediacy of Pound's epic matter, the form of *The Cantos*, the complete passage through, in and around objects, historical events, the living them at once and not merely as approximation of their statistical historical points of contact" (*Prepositions* 77). In Zukofsky's interpretation, Pound's long poem is an assembly of source material, or textual objects, and the work of the reader is in bringing these objects into relation to one another. This work is made necessary by *The Cantos*'s method of construction: "With *however's* and *it follows that* omitted, the presentation of the *Cantos* resembles the flash on the screen of century after century. Distrust of this method is like the distrust of building construction nowadays: there must be something weak in the materials or they couldn't come up so fast" (*Prepositions* 77). Zukofsky here provides a useful crib for parataxis: by omitting subordinating connectors Pound creates an arrangement of discrete objects. Parataxis relies on the strength of the constituting materials to create a structure in which the reader must make a "complete passage through, in and around objects" (77). The reader must confront these objects directly,

[57] Robert Creeley wrote a brief poem apparently in tribute to this line of his admired elder: in its entirety, "A Piece" reads "One and/one, two,/three" (*Words*).

since Pound, like Zukofsky, leaves out the discursive, hypotactic connectors of "howevers." The strength of a poem, therefore, lies in the materials selected. In Zukofsky's interpretation, Pound's project is "directed toward inclusiveness, setting down one's extant world and other existing worlds, interrelated in a general scheme of people speaking in accord with the musical measure, or spoken about in song; people, of their own weight determining, or already determined" (*Prepositions* 75).[58] Zukofsky's interpretation of Pound's archive as "inclusive" diametrically opposes Michael O'Driscoll's assessment of *The Cantos* "exclusivity" implied by his selective cultural caretaking (182). It is a better description of how his own textual archive will operate. At this early point in his career, Zukofsky uses Pound as a means of exploring his own emerging methods; it is Zukofsky more than Pound who is an inclusive archivist.

After a beginning very much in the mode of Pound's marked citation of cultural sources, *"A"* began to more subtly weave in a wider, more inclusive, variety of sources. Poundian ideograms gave way to fugue-like structures and then to movements that frustrate the sense-making of language altogether. It is difficult to generalize about *"A"* overall because its flexible structure incorporates the changes in Zukofsky's personal life, his poetics, and American society at large that occurred during its extended period of composition. *"A"* is so vast and multi-faceted that it is difficult to discuss. To talk about it with any precision at all, critics subdivide *"A"* according to general qualities that allow for more specific discussion of local passages.[59] The publishing history conveniently

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[58] As I mentioned, music shadows archives throughout Zukofsky's work. In this passage, Zukofsky hints at a music constituted by objects. It is only in working within a collection that Pound, and in fact Zukofsky, discovers music.

[59] Fortunately *"A"*, like many long poems, lends itself to subdivision. Shifts in such poems occur as the poets, in the long process of composition, change their minds about their projects. Critics hone in on (or invent) such pivot points in the poems. For instance, Ahearn claims that "A"-10 marks a transition from the public to the private; Hatlen says that "A"-12 turns from the modern to the post-modern; Quartermain, Barret Watten, and others see that the second half of "A"-9 marks an exchange of a materialist, Marxist world view for a domestic one. For the purposes of explication, Ahearn further maps the long poem into

breaks the long poem into five individually printed volumes: *"A" 1-12*,*"A" 13-20*, *"A"-21*, *"A" 22 & 23*, and *"A"-24*. These divisions also demonstrate an evolution of archival technique. In Pound's understanding of the long poem as a cultural repository, Zukofsky found the first model for his own project. However, *"A"* evolved quite differently from *The Cantos*. In "A"-12, Zukofsky turns from the prominent use of historical materials to more personal ones. He describes his work as compiling a series of clippings into a notebook, and takes steps to project in his printed text the material state of primary documents, by incorporating personal communications in a state near their personal form. History, for Zukofsky, turns from materialistic to personal in the course of *"A"*; as a result, *"A"* begins to gather more mundane and personal materials. In the middle movements of *"A"*, *"A" 13-20*, Zukofsky continues to narrate his composition process. He does not shun the outside world, but incorporates it into his personal project by clipping and saving newspaper articles—both literally in his archive and textually in his archival poem. It is notable that not only do Zukofsky's politics diametrically oppose Pound's, so does his ultimate archival strategy. Zukofsky's variation from Poundian poetics is marked by a shift in archival principles. From the arrangement of economic thinkers in *"A"*-8 to the integration of articles clipped from *The New York Times* in *"A"*-18, Zukofsky is decreasingly interested in promoting a heroic, Poundian ethos founded on documenting exemplary figures like Sigismund Malatesta and increasingly preoccupied with observing and recording the intersection of historical particulars and domestic life. The final movements of *"A"*, published in *"A" 22 & 23* and *"A"-24*, conclude his commitment to incorporated source material, even as the semantic uses of language become increasingly subordinated to linguistic and aural playfulness.

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four sections: a preliminary "A"-1-7; the refining of the "political fugue" technique in "A"-8-12; a turn to domesticity in "A"-13-20; and a celebratory, linguistically dense, and playful closing in "A"-21-24.

Although I will approach *"A"* by way of archives, other interpretive frames are suggested by the text of the poem. In particular, musical frames are continually evoked. Zukofsky, a self-styled "writer of music" (*CSP* 61), went to great lengths to accentuate musical parallels in *"A"*. He referred to the sections of the poem as "movements," a term typically associated with musical structures like the symphony, not literary ones. Individual movements of the poem explicitly imitate such forms as the fugue (in "A"-8 and "A"-12) and the partita (the Baroque suite that provides the subtitle of "A"-13), and of course the poem culminates with *"A"*-24, a setting of Zukofsky's writing to the score of Handel's "Pieces for the Harpsichord." Early in the poem, Zukofsky characterizes the movements of *"A"* as a set of leaves "ranged around the center," or a primary motif. This central, controlling principle is stated as music: "the music steeps in the center" (7). Zukofsky's entire poetic practice ranges between a "Lower limit speech" and "Upper limit music" (138). These musical aspirations do not negate or necessarily supersede the archival nature of the long poem. If Zukofsky is a "writer of music," he nonetheless works with archival sources and methods to construct this music. To adapt the Irish proverb, his is truly a "music of what happened." In Zukofsky's work, these frames are not contradictory but complementary.

"A" 1-12

It took Zukofsky many years to see the first half of his long poem into print; his first notes date from 1928, and he finished "A"-12 in 1951, but the twelve movements were not published together in book form until 1959, and not in a widely-distributed edition until 1967. These first twelve movements of *"A"* weave together a wide variety of source material. The earliest movements arrange cultural and economic particulars of both the historic and contemporary varieties. "A"-1, for example, is constructed from material spanning several centuries: episodes from Johann Sebastian Bach's life and the

oratio of his *Passion of St. Matthew*, the writings of Henry Ford, and biographical data from Zukofsky's own life. The famous opening passage not only begins this temporal overlay but introduces the ongoing musical theme:

> A
> Round of fiddles playing Bach.
> Come, ye daughters, share my anguish—
> Bare arms, black dresses,
> See Him! Whom?
> Bediamond the passion of our Lord,
> See Him! How?
> His legs blue, tendons bleeding,
> O Lamb of God most holy!
> Black full dress of the audience. (1)

This scene, which records Zukofsky's attendance at the April 5, 1928 performance of Bach's *Passion of St. Matthew* at Carnegie Hall, alternates translated lines from the oratio with images of the elegantly dressed, well-to-do audience. The first word, "A," not only provides the poem's title, but encapsulates its devotion to the particular: Exalting the indefinite article defines the area of exploration of the poem—we cannot expect the categorical sameness denoted by the definite article, but must explore each individual occurrence: "a" performance of Bach rather than "the" music of Bach.[60] The performance conjures Bach at the point of composition, 199 years earlier. Just as the A1 road connecting London and Glasgow lies over the route of the historic Great Northern road, the contemporary performance retraces the particulars of Bach's biography:

> Dead century, where are your motley
> Country people in Leipzig,
> Easter,
> Matronly flounces, starched, heaving,
> Cheeks of the patrons of Leipzig—
> "Going to Church? Where's the baby?"

[60] The first word of the poem resonates in other ways as well. In the poem, "a" refers to the letter, the article, the vitamin, and a description of sawhorses. It is even a reference to the musical setting, since, as Hugh Kenner tells, us, A is the key in which an orchestra tunes their instruments.

"Ah, there's the Kapellmeister
  in a terrible hurry—
Johann Sebastian, twenty-two
  children!" (1)

The first twenty lines shows Zukofsky's comfort with free verse techniques of the 1920s. The chronological jump is marked by a phrase, "Dead century," that echoes Eliot's apostrophe to the "Unreal City," and the imagery of this first movement evokes the hell-on-earth of a Modern Waste Land. Like *The Cantos*, *"A"* opens with a descent into hell, although Zukofsky's is figurative and comic:

Galleries darkening.
"Not that exit, Sir!"
Ecdysis: the serpent coming out, molting,
As tho blood stained the floor as the foot steeped,
Bleeding chamfer for shoulder:
"Not that exit!"
"Devil! Which?"— (2)

The demon Ecdysis, visiting from Dante's *Inferno* (which provides the final line of the movement: "Open, O fierce flaming pit!" (5)) is the most hellish figure present, but the colloquial invocation of the devil a few lines later, the cigarette smoke obscuring the exit sign, and to miners buried in an accident (as mentioned by an effete audience member) all parody an infernal setting. Accompanying these Modernist techniques is a short anthology of juxtaposed citations from Pound, Williams, and E.E. Cummings. This brief survey of contemporary texts consists of quotations from Pound's *Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony*, Williams's novel *A Voyage to Pagany* (from a description of another performance of Bach's *Passion of St. Mathew*), and Cummings's play *Him*:

"There are different techniques,
Men write to be read, or spoken,
Or declaimed, or rhapsodized,
And quite differently to be sung";
"I heard him agonizing,
I saw him *inside*";

"Everything which
We really are and never quite live." (4)

This sequence of quotations not only serves Zukofsky to place himself in the desirable company of contemporary innovators, adept with "different techniques" borrowed from musicians like Antheil, but it demonstrates what technique he will follow for much of the poem: paratactic presentation of his materials, with no commentary or connection.[61] Seldom will these sources be cited, and as the poem continues, they will become increasingly recondite and personal. This sequence of quotations introduces themes that will persist throughout *"A"*: the search for innovative techniques to investigate the modern world, the double voice of speech and music, and the scope of the individual life.

Considering what the long poem grew into,"A"-1 begins tentatively. The set of quotations cited above is prefaced by a modest description of the writer's work: "Not boiling to put pen to paper / Perhaps a few things to remember—" (4). The words of Pound, Williams, and Cummings are in effect jotted down, or informally documented, for future reference. As the opening movements unfold, we come to realize that Zukofsky's selective principle is, as he saw in Pound, inclusivity: In "A"-6, which acts as a sort of resting place and as a capstone of the opening movements, Zukofsky muses, "The song—omits? / No, includes…" (23). The problem inherent in an inclusive repository is that "[i]f *"A"* continues to introduce new material… the sheer multiplicity of items may

[61] The presence of Pound and Williams in this first movement might serve as justification of reading Zukofsky in the context of his older contemporaries. Even now, Zukofsky is still emerging from under the shadows of his older contemporaries, and so *"A"* is often discussed in reference to the long poems *Paterson* or especially *The Cantos*. For instance, Burton Hatlen argues that *"A"* "represents a sustained effort to write, within a poetic mode that derives from Pound, a democratic and socialist response to the elitist and fascist political epic that Pound himself was writing during the 1930s" (206). The Pound-Williams tradition has become a sort of frame for interpreting Zukofsky, a frame that the present analysis adopts, though calling it the archival tradition of the American long poem. The comparison to Pound and Williams is not without warrant: Sandra Kumamoto Stanley's *Louis Zukofsky and the Transformation of a Modern American Poetics* details the intersections of Zukofsky's poetics with Pound's and Williams's. *"A"* begins in clear similarity to *The Cantos* and reflects the influence of Pound throughout the first half. The influence of Williams begins to become more pronounced in the more personal *"A"*-12, culminating in Zukofsky's tribute to Williams in "A*"*-17.

overwhelm the poem. It could collapse into an olio of unrelated items" (Ahearn 52). "A"-6 begins with a fragmentary phrase ("Environs, the sea of—" (21)), suggesting that the steady influx of material will frustrate clear speech. Zukofsky has not solved this dilemma by the end of this movement, although he may at least be closer to stating it. "A"-6 ends with the question (or a truncated declarative?) "With all this material/To what distinction –" (38). The problem is one of form, in finding a container that will give shape to "all this material," that will distinguish it from a simple mass of quotation and observation.

Zukofsky hazards many elaborately formal solutions to his problem. For instance,"A"-7 is a set of seven sonnets. Sonneteers are lambasted as "[i]mmured holluschickies" in "A"-1, and Zukofsky immediately moves on to attempt another, more flexible, form in *"A"*-8, the fugue. The fugue, of course, is a systematic musical form closely associated with the Baroque period. Bach himself was a master of the fugue, composing the well-known *Art of the Fugue* and many other works. In lay terms, a fugue is based on the repetition of a single theme, called the subject. An instrument or perhaps a human voice states the subject, then a second instrument or voice repeats that subject, usually at a higher pitch, while the first voice modifies into complementary counterpoint to support this new statement of the subject. Zukofsky imitates the fugue in "A"-8 by integrating such sources as Veblen, Marx, and Henry Adams into a pattern in which the selected quotations vary or imitate the poem's central theme (or fugal "subject") of economic equity. Zukofsky attempts to answer affirmatively the question he posed in "A"-6:

> *Can*
> The design
> Of the fugue
> Be transferred
> To poetry? (38)

Zukofsky apparently had some doubts about the possibility of this transference, as the fact of asking this question indicates. Before undertaking "A"-8, he had called the fugue "a music heap / only by the name's grace music" (22).[62] But the "design / Of the fugue" is a possible solution to the problem of *"A"*, which is to find a form capable of containing and structuring the events of an individual life. Eight voices (all relating to Marx, Bach, or Jesus) alternate and intertwine in imitation of the musical form. For Zukofsky, a literary fugue was a "music of… statements, but not explanation ever, that's why I seem to leave out [the explanations]" (Ahearn 75). These statements are grouped into eight voices that rely heavily on transcribed sources. Ahearn uses documents in the HRC to sketch out these themes, but *"A"*-8 quickly falls away from this pattern (see Ahearn 74-76). That the first voice, which Zukofsky designates "Labor as creator, as creature," resonates with the seventh voice, "matter thinking, bodily substance," is conceivable: both these themes presume that knowledge is created by the interaction of people and the objects of the world. In this thematic unity, *"A"*-8 can be thought of as a fugue, in that the same subject is expressed in different voices. But the other element of fugue, the shifting of the subject to counterpoint, is more difficult to conceive. Scroggins notes that Zukofsky operates with a "horizontal" idea of counterpoint: the voice will return, modified into counterpoint, later in the poem. This would be opposed to "vertical" counterpoint, "between two lines of music played simultaneously…But we are already deep in allegory: in strict musical terminology, a 'horizontal' counterpoint is sheer nonsense" (193). For Zukofsky, fugue is not a strict translation of musical form into language, but a manner of speaking about drawing discrete materials into relation with

[62] Yet he also, later, approvingly cites Bach: "The parts of a fugue should behave like reasonable men / in an orderly discussion" (127)

one another. However, the looser structure of the archive is more willing to accommodate this wealth of material, and to integrate it all into an argument.

Early in "A"-8, Zukofsky cites a scholastic philosopher to illustrate the object-based epistemology at play in his poetry:

> Whether it was 'impossible for matter to think?'
> Duns Scotus posed.
> Unbodily substance is an absurdity
> like unbodily body. It is impossible
> to separate thought and matter that thinks. (46)

In this passage, Zukofsky uses Scotus to explain how thought is a physical process and how thoughts arise from the combination of objects—"matter." In Scotus, the "matter that thinks" is the human body, but as this passage occurs in an arrangement of materials devoted to a single theme, these unconnected documents are assigned the role of developing an argument. Zukofsky, disdaining the discursive or explanatory role of the writer, simply leaves the explanations out. Sandwiched between citations from Marx, this passage resonates with the materialist subject of the fugue. Thought is not only bound up with matter, but with human activity: "*Infinite* is a meaningless word: except – it states / The mind is capable of performing / an endless process of addition" (46). This "addition" is the coming into contact with a succession of data. The unbounded possibility of thought is a sort of value extracted from this activity: "No thought exists / Completely abstracted from action" (47). Any manner of thought, whether simple or complex, results from this process:

> The simple will be discovered beneath the complex
> Then the complex under the simple
> Then again the simple under the complex
> And, and, the chain without sight of the last term,
> etc., Etc., (47)

The "and" or "etc" represents the continual construction of thought and ongoing enrichment of *"A"* with more material. The material may find musical relationships, but the constant accumulation would tend to overwhelm a repetitive form such as the fugue.

The fugue structure of "eight themes spacing eight voices" (50) breaks down before the end of "A"-8, or at least the movement swells with sources to the point where the original voices are undetectable. While ventriloquizing Marx, Zukofsky hints at frustration with the repeating pattern of the fugue: "repetition/..damnable iteration ..art able to corrupt a saint.// --repetition" (57). The poem soon bursts into a parodic drinking song in a broad German accent (perhaps mimicking Bach as well as Marx):

> First time witt repetition!
> *Two time witt repetition!*
> *Three time without repetition!*
> *Wit-hout! Wit-hout! Wit-hout!* (59, italics in original)

"A"-8 continues "wit-hout" repeating the themes as strictly, even though the term itself is repeated in context of the Marxist "dictatorship of the proletariat" that dies "without repetition" (61). At this point, "A"-8 apparently breaks away from the repetitive fugue structure into descriptions of consumer goods in imitation of advertising copy; Bosch paintings; an early Soviet attempt at space flight (an interest kept and expanded on in the middle movements of *"A"*); scenes from American Jewish history and labor history; tension over the growing fascist threat from Italy, Germany and Spain; and also direct citations from letters of Henry Adams, Karl Marx, and Thomas Jefferson (and legal documents by Jefferson). The combination of imagery and citation is not problematic for Zukofsky, since these are all objects that he deploys.[63]

Following a series of relatively short movements, "A"-12 is another large-scale "fugue" constructed out of a wide range of documents and images, but a greater number

[63] Imagery and citation conjoin for Zukofsky in the neat formulation "Cite..Sight.." (90).

of these documents are identifiably personal. At one hundred and thirty-five pages, "A"-12 accounts for more than half of the poem to this point and is the second longest movement of the entire poem. (Only "A"-24 is longer by page count, although the accompanying score provides much less linguistic density.) Like "A"-8, "A"-12 makes extensive use of source material, incorporating lengthy passages of Spinoza, Aristotle, Shakespeare, and personal letters into an increasingly loose and capacious structure. Sources are incorporated so extensively that Zukofsky humorously defines his art as one of appropriation: In the midst of "A"-12, his young son warns him, "Wait till they find out / Where you took most of 'your' poetry" (214). Scroggins writes that in "A"-12 we find "Zukofsky's method at its most naked… the poem presents the materials of its own construction as nothing more than one poet's random accumulation" (219). In "A"-12, we for the first time see Zukofsky as a poet coming to grips with the materials of his domestic life.

Among the documents constituting "A"-12 are personal letters to and from Zukofsky. A letter to Lorine Niedecker describes the recursive nature of *"A":*

> …Each writer writes
> one long work whose beat he cannot
> entirely be aware of. Recurrences
> follow him, crib and drink from a
> well that's his cadence – after
> he's gone. What struck you, as
> I think you meant, choppy in
> "A," 13 years or so back when
> I tried hard for the ["] fact," I
> reread sometimes to tie in with
> what goes on now, and the "fact"
> is not so hard-set as a paradigm.
> I have to reread several times
> to find out what I meant. Only
> after a while, with no pen in hand,
> does the "fact" I wanted come
> back – a sort of perennial-annual. (214-215)

"13 years or so back," Zukofsky was working on "A"-8. In the archive of *"A"*, Zukofsky deposits documents which contain "facts" which may not be apparent, but which only reveal meaning by rereading them "several times." Naturally, the reader has as much if not more trouble finding "the beat" of this "long work," but Zukofsky expresses confidence that the structure, the archive of *"A"*, contains the materials necessary to construct "fact," which is after all not so hard-set as a "paradigm." There are many interpretations available to the reader, all based on putting the documents of the archive in some relation.

Following this letter to Niedecker are several letters Zukofsky received from a young former neighbor now enlisted in the Army—"Jackie, American, Poor Pay Pfc, Roman Catholic" (223). Jackie's simple, grammatically inconsistent letters vary the texture not only of Zukofsky's poetic register but the visual appearance of the page because of the long prose lines and eccentric double spacing between words (see 216-223). These features, along with such letter-writing conventions as address headings, U.S. Army letterhead, and formulaic salutations ("Dear Mr. Zukofsky") and closings ("As Ever/Jackie), emphasize the features of letter-as-letter—as if these are not quoted or transcribed passages but physical letters enclosed within "A"-12. These six letters appear near the middle of the movement, without any introduction or apparent connection to other material. The reader must discover the "facts" through rereading and comparison. A narrative suggests itself in the simulated headings: a sequence of letters posted from boot camp, from Japan, and from the American Red Cross serve as evidence for a progress of training, serving at the front, and an injury that Jackie barely hints at, but other purposes of these letters may be to document the political context of the Korean War ("Koria" to Jackie) and the cultural diversity of Zukofsky's Brooklyn (Jackie, a "Roman Catholic," asks after Zukofsky's son Paul in friendship), and also to provide a parodic counterpoint

to the "Telemachus" theme developed in later movements.[64] That these themes are present in lightly edited, semi-literate documents attests to the suggestive power of incorporated documents.

In extensively integrating documents such as these letters, Zukofsky hints at a poetics based on the materiality of documents:

> Texts: Things
> Axiom: He composed –or
> hunted, sowed and
> *made things* –
> with hand or bent –
> is matter and thinks (164)

These texts are objects, "things," and thinking is a 'matter' of hunting down such objects and collecting them into composed arrangements. The elliptical statement of this notion ("is matter and thinks," alludes to Duns Scotus and therefore his citation of Scotus in "A"-8, but lacks a clear subject) at once mimics Zukofsky's extensive editing of his sources and shows confidence in this materialist, object-based epistemology. Simply collecting and arranging his texts makes his point, so that he need not worry about making a complete linguistic statement.

The identity "Texts: Things" is dramatized by emphasizing the material qualities of letters, including glyphs like Paul's valentine (129) and Zukofsky's diagram for Paul's education (which immediately precedes that equation of texts and things. Perloff locates such pictograms between Zukofsky's limits of speech and music (*Dance* 184), but as "text-things" they might be thought of existing apart from that integral. As material objects, they are not defined by sound. Another household "text-thing" described at length in "A"-12 is a collage representing the workshop of the cabinetmaker Duncan

[64] Perloff identifies this theme in *Dance of the Intellect* (184). Zukofsky criticism badly needs a detailed working out of this important theme.

Phyfe. Phyfe was an American craftsman whom Zukofsky studied and wrote about while working on *The Index of American Design*. Although this collage is not in the HRC collection, Zukofsky has taken some measures to protect it:

> Looking maybe into black
> construction paper
> On which all three parts
> of this collage are pasted
> And that extends its 1/4-inch border
> To a wood frame
> The whole preserved under a glass
> About the size of a sheet
> Of manuscript paper (241)

Not only is this text safely preserved in a format similar to "manuscript paper" (foreshadowing its conversion into literature), but its precise description is preserved by the publication of *"A"*. By accentuating the material nature of these documents, Zukofsky dramatizes the preservative function of *"A"*.

This collage is just one in a torrent of published and private documents that overtakes the poem in this movement. To Zukofsky, poetry is a matter of discovery and arrangement, and the work of creating the poem is described as such. "A friend, a Z the 3rd letter of his (the first of my) last name" (most likely Charles Reznikoff) says to Zukofsky

> --Of making many books
> So much a day jotted down
> In a notebook assures them.
> There's the other extreme
> Who makes his life a notebook. (193)

This passage dramatizes the composition style of *"A"*, a recurring theme in the poem. In the previous chapter, I describe Zukofsky's collecting of observations and clippings into his black notebook, which he filtered and transcribed into spiral notebooks. Here the composition ("so much a day jotted down / In a notebook") is conjoined with

the life that inspires the composition. He "[w]ho makes his life a notebook" writes "a poem of a life." Since his collecting technique varies so widely from standard notions of Romantic inspiration, Zuksoky begins to question the status of his work: is it even a "book" at all? Just as the title *"A"* always includes quotation marks, Zukofsky places the term "book" in quotation marks: "I've finished 12 'books,' / so to speak, / Of 24 –" (258). Because of his publishing struggles and his materialist poetics, *"A"* is just as much an archive of clippings jumbled on his desk (244) or gathered in his black notebook as it is a book. When confronted with a jumble of sources, "I clear my desk of clippings" (244). He has

> Files and head
> Of twenty years notes
> To make life easier to
> handle (244)

This archive of twenty years of writing *"A"* is "[e]nough for a book," but he wonders "Must I work on them" (245)?

Zukofsky's composing is folded into a life of domestic interactions, work, and especially reading:

> I don't seem to read books any more
> Tho I suppose actually
> I read them all the time.
> I don't read the newspapers
> Tho once a week I seem to spend a day on them –
> As I did today –

These days spent reviewing newspapers result in clippings that he uses for *"A"*, many of which are preserved in the HRC archive. The procedure led to collecting clippings into envelopes:

> You ask
> -What's in this envelope
> These are some things I wanted

To get into a poem,
Some unfinished work
I may never finish,
Some that will never be used anywhere
You don't have to type – (251)

Zukofsky is here speaking to Celia, whom he has characterized as "my one reader/ who types me" (246). The material that is not used will never be typed by Celia, and will never be read in the context of the poem. Included with the clippings are hand-written notes. In viewing these, Zukofsky again experiences anxiety over preserving them:

Much of it in pencil – blurred – other
notes written over it
I can't read back thru the years –
[It] is worth jotting down
In ink, as sometime
I may be sorry
When the sense is entirely destroyed. (251)[65]

Although he favored pencil in his early days, he switched to the more readable pen and ink to preserve these jottings. As he amassed his archives, the perishability of the documents recording his works and days began to preoccupy him. The containing of these documents becomes the dramatic action of "A"-12, and will continue to be portrayed in the next set of movements.

"A" 13-21

To abuse geometry a bit, the movements collected in *"A"13-21* might be thought of as the middle movements of the poem. This volume was published in 1969 by Jonathan Cape in Great Britain and again by the Paris Review Editions in the United States. Appearing just a few years after the Paris Review edition of *"A" 1-12* suggests a remarkable flurry of composition on Zukofsky's part, but he had begun work on "A"-13

[65] Each published version of *"A"* renders the fourth line of this quotation as "Is is," an obvious error that persists through all published editions of "A"-12. HRC manuscripts indicate that "It is" is the intended formulation.

in 1960 and finished "A"-21 in 1967. These movements suffer from even greater critical neglect than the first half or the closing movements. The reader finds less obvious citation here than in "A"-8 or "A"-12, but even more appropriated language. Zukofsky uses such devices such as homophonic translation, punning, and extensively edited quotation to work in source material. These movements represent a further retreat into domestic life, suggesting an alienation from public life, set against such political and social events as the civil rights movement, space exploration, and escalating political tension in Indochina. As in the first half, Zukofsky directly invokes Baroque music, labeling the five-part "A"-13 a "partita." As Bach deployed the form, "partita" is essentially a synonym for "suite." In these middle movements, music is constructed out of reports of contemporary events, drawing frequently on newspaper articles. Paradoxically, the inwardness and personalization of *"A"13-20* lead to an even broader inclusiveness for the archive of *"A"*. Most of the documents cited in these movements represent what Ahearn calls Zukofsky's "contact with the everyday world" (135), often by way of *The New York Times* or other mass media. Some of these topical references are difficult to identify. Some are incorporated into puns: Admiral Hyman Rickover, overseer of American's nuclear fleet, becomes "Admiral Kickover" (281), while conservative Senator Barry Goldwater is distorted into "episcopal goldwasser Polyuria" (354). Others are rendered by oblique descriptions (Robert Frost described as "Old man" and John F. Kennedy as "bonny prince" in a depiction of the Kennedy inaugural (350).) A contemporary reader might have better success identifying edited and transformed passages from literary sources. Mark McMorris identifies some of these sources and observes that these middle movements use historical events and source material to "respond to decolonization" that was occurring in the period the poems were written (11). These movements not only refer to the dismantling of European empires in Africa and the

Caribbean, but to the ascendance of the United States to similar power (and attendant imperial strife as represented by the civil rights struggle, the Kennedy assassination, and the early stages of the Vietnam War). News accounts of these events are mingled with such markers of Empire as snippets of homophonic Roman poetry and passages from Gibbons's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. These disparate materials contribute to "discontinuity, unrelatedness, and displacement in a poetry where the foreground changes frequently and without syntactic cues" (McMorris 18), characteristics we have already found in archives and archival poems.

These middle movements not only increasingly show archiving as a method of construction, but this method continues to be reflected in the subject matter of the poem. Zukofsky follows the notebook and envelope procedures described in "A"-12 as much as ever. Many details in these movements have been clipped from newspapers and other print sources. In fact, a newspaper is extensively represented in "A"-13. The main action of this movement is a long walk Zukofsky takes with his son, "[f]rom 12 street home all the way / Across Brooklyn Bridge…/ [to] The Old Fire House Museum on Duane Street" (280). On their way back, the pair pauses to watch the harbor as the evening lights come up, and they see a

> …man on a bench facing the water
> Writing a letter at sunset
> Or a little after,
> The last five evenings
> Then reading his newspaper.
> --Surprising how long he can read the print after dark.
> And what's in today's ashcan
> The large leaves of newspaper. (275)

The fading light puts more importance on the documentary act, since it is getting later and harder to read (remember) the past. The rushing future is all too ready to immediately discard the past to "today's ashcan." Father and son take a seat near by, the son beginning

to doze off from the fatigue of the day's walk. Soon, "[t]he gent's gone I've inherited his *Times*" (285). The poet allows us to read it over his shoulder:

> Here read it yourself:
> *--Protesting a tax on horsetails for bows*
> *M.P. was told 'I am glad he has*
> *an interest in violins. I thought*
> *he belonged to the wind*
> *rather than the strings.'*
> --Take it along it's tomorrow's. (285)

The final line refers not only to the once common "bulldog" edition of a morning paper released the previous evening, but with Zukofsky's activity in saving the paper for another day. The cited article happens to refer to two of the frequent motifs in *"A"*, horses and violins. Because of this coincidence, Zukofsky preserves the article. Since father and son have just come from a historical museum, the preserving function of archives was on Zukofsky's mind.

The newspaper does not completely fulfill Zukofsky's need of source material. The paper may report national events, but lacks both the coverage of the family's domestic life and the important cultural contributions of Zukofsky and his peers. Even though his notoriety as an accused traitor was still high, Pound's artistic accomplishments are only treated superficially in the papers, as a crossword puzzle clue. While Pound's presence is reduced to a passing, whimsical reference by this point of the poem, Williams is honored at length in"A"-17, titled "A CORONAL" and dedicated "to Floss" (i.e., Flossie Williams). "A"-17 is a sort of display of items from Zukofsky's personal archive presented in tribute to his recently deceased mentor. It is an arrangement of quotations from Zukofsky's work, Williams's work, and the friends' correspondence. After a quotation from the Williams poem "Anemones," which serves as a prologue (the flowers "stood green in the slender source / —And new books of poetry / will be written…"

(377)), it proceeds to present a series of documents arranged chronologically (the years are cited in the margins), beginning with Zukofsky's own citation of Williams in "A"-1:

> Not boiling to put pen to paper
> Perhaps a few things to remember—…
> "I heard him agonizing,
> I saw him *inside* … (377)

This citation not only testifies to Williams's influence on his own project, but it elides Pound with the first ellipsis. This change represents the poets' personal histories. After an initial flurry of correspondence between Pound and Zukofsky in the late twenties and early thirties, Williams later became Zukofsky's most frequent correspondent and most enduring mentor and champion. Evidence of this influence abounds in "A"-17, including excepts from Zukofsky's "Sincerity and Objectification" essay, his analysis of "The Red Wheelbarrow" from *A Test of Poetry*, and short poems which refer to Williams or bear his influence. A few pages into the movement, we also see evidence that Williams's long friendship with the Zukofskys in the citation of the dedication of *The Wedge* to "L.Z." and in a friendly letter from Williams to Celia on the possibility of setting his *Choral: The Pink Church* to music (381). The archive of the friendship ends, movingly, with the reproduction of Williams's shaky inscription in Zukofsky's copy of *Pictures from Brueghel*. This material register of Zukofsky's library carries with it testament to a long friendship, evidence of Williams's decaying health, and an allusion to both men's poetic exploration into material objects.

"A"-18 again dramatizes the clippings collection techniques revealed in "A"-12. Just after observing "I am here let the days live their/lines two days bird's down assures life a note(book)" (390) Zukofsky incorporates the full text of short poem "I Sent Thee Late," written in 1922 when Zukofsky was at Columbia. It was, in the opinions of both Louis and Celia, his only worthwhile early poem, and since it had not been published in

his collection of short poems yet, it is incorporated into *"A"*, finally now coming into print. This preservation carries with it a great deal of criticism:

> Stupid perhaps bright with the youngest of my
> days for you more than my work nobody
> to speak of did it say a wedding
> rite sang not vain chance I Sent Thee Late
> 'Not Exactly Personal C.Z. wanted to save
> this poem written in 1922. "I sent thee
> late"—wanting one supposes honor, a "rosy" (?)
> "wreathe" asks that it "breathe" of "thee" even
> if it is "itself"
>
> I SENT THEE LATE
> Vast, tremulous;
> Grave on grave of water-grave:
>
> Past.
>
> Futurity no more than duration
> Of a wave's rise, fall, rebound
> Against the shingles, in ever repeated mutation
> Of emptied returning sound.' (390-391)

This is not the only example of Zukofsky incorporating his short poems as discrete objects in *"A"*. One need look no further back than "A"-17, in which he cites his own work to attest to Williams's influence. Celia "wanted to save/this poem written in 1922," so Zukofsky incorporated it into *"A"*. Clearly, Zukofsky saw that *"A"* had a preservative function.

"A"-18 again prominently incorporates newspaper clippings, and since this movement was written after Zukofsky had established his archive at Texas, he saw this poetic source material as archival material too. These clippings were not only transferred to his manuscripts but would soon be on their way to preservation at the HRC. In the Zukofsky archive, an envelope labeled ""A"-18-19/L.Z." contains handwritten notes on four scraps of note paper, a matchbook, four newspaper clippings and one magazine

clipping. These clippings include an article headlined "Two Soviet Astronauts Return From Remote Area," from the Monday, March 22, 1965 edition of *The New York Times*; another headlined "Throngs of Vietnamese Pilgrims Visit Pond of 'Miraculous Fish'" from the September 1, 1963 edition; of the *Times*; a piece on "The discovery of the antineutron" from the Columbia alumni magazine, (again labeled "18" at the top); an article bearing the headlines "Medical Practice of 2100 B.C. Is Told" and "Sumerian tablet at University of Pennsylvania 'Is Free From Irrational elements'" (from the *Times* of Sunday, September 27, 1953); and a review of the book *Jenny Lind: The Swedish Nightingale* by Gladys Denny Shultz from the *New York Times Book Review* of Sunday August 12, 1962, also labeled "18" at the top. This last item, about a famous singer previously referred to in "A"-12, includes an uncomplimentary comment by Walt Whitman marked by Zukofsky: "Let critics say what they like, it was a failure, for there was a vacuum in the head of the performance." Zukofsky has added a comment to the margin of this article: "The advertised artist 'got there' as usual: and no further." The preserved envelope, labeled "A" 18-19 is a figurative counterpart to the movements themselves, since it also serves as a container for these documents.

Each of these documents is incorporated into "A"-18 or –19 in one way or another. The review of the Jenny Lind biography may have reminded Zukofsky of a visit with Paul to "the ruins of Castle Garden / Where Jenny Lind sang / Before my time…" recorded in "A"-12 (189). This previous interest in, and inclusion of Lind in *"A"*, prefigures the citation of Whitman's remarks on the singer in the later movement:

> Whitman on
> Jenny Lind
> for "all
> her blandishments
> never touched
> my heart

.. dexterity .. all
very pretty
.. leaps .. double
somersaults" their
time gone by (418)

Zukofsky not only includes an edited citation of Whitman, but his inclusion of the original document in his archive allowed him to add his interpretation of this commercial artist. In other cases Zukofsky explicitly signals that his source is the newspaper, such as setting a headline in capital letters ("THRONGS OF/VIETNAMESE PILGRIMS VISIT POND OF MIRACULOUS FISH") before quoting from the second, third, and fourth paragraphs of a *New York Times* news story:

'The pond is in Quang Nam about 30
miles west of Danang where hate between Buddhists
(about 80 per cent of the population) and
Roman Catholics equals "*strong*." The miracle happened about
two months ago in the middle of the crisis
the Buddhists accusing the Government of discriminating against
them. Word spread. A giant fish apparently a
carp swimming in a pond the incarnate Buddha. (392)

The changes to the story here are minor. Aside from the new element of lineation, there are only a few altered words. The more direct "hate" replaces "animosity"; "equals" replaces an ungrammatical "is"; "happened" replaces "began"; and the simpler "incarnate Buddha" replaces reincarnation of a disciple of Buddha." The article fits the pattern of American international expansion, that McMorris identifies in the middle movements, since it characterizes the tension between Buddhism and Western religion and concludes with American soldiers filling their canteens with water from this pond. Zukofsky's modifications are minor and do not alter the content of the piece. The word changes actually simplify and clarify the story. Zukofsky's archive in this sense improves on the "paper of record."

Following two movements about son Paul's burgeoning musical career, this middle section of *"A"* ends with an eccentric translation of the Roman playwright Plautus's *Rudens*. The first two of these are in effect family scrapbooks. "A"-19 is musical, allusive, lyrical.[66] "A"-20 is objective, primarily a two-page program of Paul's performance at a contest in Vienna with a Renaissance pastiche written by Paul as a boy added at the end. "A"-21, the "Rudens," recalls Zukofsky's homophonic translations of Catullus more than any aspect of archives. There remains a trove of scholarly resources in the HRC archive. Not only Zukofsky's composition books but his annotated edition of the Loeb Plautus, his source text, await a future scholar's study.

"A"-22 & 23

"A"-22 & 23, published by Grossman in 1975, brings the poem to a conclusion. (*"A"*-24, a *sui generis* setting of music and language, was actually published several years earlier, but adds no original poetry. However, since it is the designated ending of *"A"* I will consider it last.) Multi-lingual puns, homophonic translations, indeterminate syntax, textual elisions, and obscure, frequently elliptical allusions dominate these late movements. Late *"A"* (and Zukofsky's final collection *80 Flowers*) may more closely approach "pure music" than any poetry in English, in the sense that the meaning of the signifiers is strongly subordinated to their sound. Indeed, reading these movements for their sound, "reading straight through for the dip and sway of the accents, the chiming of vocal clusters, the echoes that leap from one page to the next" (Ahearn 181), finds a significant allure in this poetry. As Zukofsky's work progresses, his language becomes less referential. Kenneth Cox writes that

[66] Cox makes a detailed reading of "A"-19, focusing on its *chaconne* structure and incorporation of Mallarme. He finds that "A"-19's complexity consists in the single apprehension of multiple concepts, its difficulty in its range, speed and volatility" (269).

> Zukofsky's exploration of language looks like a child's exploration of a new toy: heedless or ignorant of its original function, fascinated by a number of other possibilities, eager to test them. It is no use pointing out that some uses are impossible, other illegitimate or meaningless. The child enjoys carefree play and any carelessness about meaning is part of the pleasure he receives and gives. If it creates uncertainty it is not of the kind which arouses doubt as to whether something means this or that. It is whether the function he has hit upon produces a level of significance sufficient to count as meaning at all. (237)

It would seem here that language's recording function is completely subordinate to its musical properties. In these movements, "flute woodnotes forbid enthymemes"; music trumps logic (559). Yet even this relatively straightforward statement unravels when read with an ear for Zukofsky's beloved punning: "flute *would not* forbid enthymemes."

Even amidst this dizzyingly complex, chiming music, Zukofsky's archiving persists. Leggott and Alison Rieke have examined Zukofsky's notebooks and found a remarkable panoply of sources woven into these movements. In working with these sources, Zukofsky expresses and enacts an object-based epistemology even in these obscure movements. Late in "A"- 22, Zukofsky writes that "thoughts' template/somehow furthers a cento reading" (535). Like almost all movements of *"A"*, these final movements constitute a "cento," a Renaissance musical *and* literary form composed of selections from various sources. Throughout these movements, Zukofsky weaves together excerpts of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Sterne, Herbert Giles's *History of Chinese Literature*, a retelling of the epic of Gilgamesh, and a homophonic translation of *Beowulf*, to name but a few sources.

Zukofsky also paraphrases the ancient *Geography* of Strabo, in which a

> …traveler recorded
> city shape of a chlamys
> street for men on horse,
> library, harbor beacon: the mind
> does not light of itself; (523)

Notably, the reference to the library is not included in the Greek geographer's description of Alexandria. Strabo mentions the famous lighthouse (the "harbor beacon"), but not the equally famous library that "lights" the mind as the lighthouse lights the harbor. That Zukofsky, whose primary technique in integrating sources is excision, in this case actually adds a reference to the library, a type of archive, is remarkable. In the structure Zukofsky constructs, texts play a crucial role, equal to personal interactions with the city, imagery of horses and lights. The human mind "does not light of itself"; rather, it becomes illuminated from interaction with other people and texts. However, the library of texts is set in opposition to music a few pages later:

> With two pupils to one
> eye in the Eastern library
> of 20,000 books one saw
> the advantage of 4 tones –
> a briefer cut to felicity. (526)

Music is "a briefer cut to felicity" than the extensive library of ancient learning. Yet music and these ancient sources are not mutually exclusive, as the example of *"A"* demonstrates. If *"A"* is music, it is nevertheless fashioned out of Zukofsky's vast archive of texts published and personal, identified and obscure, lauded and unknown. Language can at once archive the past and celebrate the moment with music.

These late movements are concerned with history in one way or another. Many critics have noted that "A"-22 is a sort of natural history, beginning with the emergence of land from the seas, while "A"-23 acts as a literary history from Gilgamesh on. In "A"-23

> History is that
> which cannot help or hurt
> a foreseen curve where many
> loci would dispose and *and*'s
> compound creature and creature together. (536)

This paratactic "compounding" of "and" upon "and" is cento-style creation of history from discrete sources. Where "A"-22 has a "nameless" history of geologic and biologic processes, "A"-23 features "saving history," encompassing art and culture:

> thought's rarer air, act , story
>
> words earth—the saving history
> not to deny the gifts
> of time where those who
> never met together may hear
> this other time sound *one*. (539)

This "saving history," identified by Ahearn with the "remembering" and "salvation" of poetry itself (193), is the "dream of a named history" which haunts Zukofsky at the end of "A"-22 (535).[67] The primarily natural history of "A"-22 followed the motto, "History's best emptied of names' / impertinence" (511). The "saving" history of "A"-23 peaks with the conclusion of the poem. Many names are "inwreath'd" throughout *"A"*, by direct citation, pun, or indirect allusion:

> A living calendar, names inwreath'd
> Bach's innocence longing Handel's untouched.
> Cue in new-old quantities—Don't
> bother me'—Bach quieted bothered;
> since Eden gardens labor, For
> series distributes harmonies, attraction Governs
> destinies. Histories dye the streets (562)

This short citation shows the alphabetic progress from A to H, a fairly clear allusion to Bach, and buried allusions to both mathematician Joseph Fourier and utopian thinker Charles Fourier embedded in the puzzling lines "since Eden gardens labor, "For / series distributes harmonies, attraction Governs / destinies." Beginning with a summary of the toil that is man's Biblical curse, Zukofsky evokes the mathematical Fourier series in an

[67] Leggott, among others, see "A"-22 as a natural history and "A"-23 as literary history (55ff). This general orientation holds, but is not strictly observed in "A"-22.

emjambed pun and conflates its heat distribution with Charles Fourier's vision of harmonious community. More easily identified puns on Walter Savage Landor ("Land or") and Mozart ("Most art") follow in the twenty-six line conclusion of this "saving history."

At its conclusion, *"A"* is denser than it has ever been. As Zukofsky writes in "A"-22," "…A/ child learns on blank paper, / an old man rewrites palimpsest" (525). As if in imitation of one of his manuscript pages, the late movements of *"A"* are crowded with recondite references and hidden citations of interpolated sources. The activity of *"A"* has been one of recording, re-transcribing, collecting, and negotiating new relationships with the vast archive of human culture. Since "A"-24 is purely citation of pre-existing work compiled by Celia, the final lines of *"A"* actually reside in "A"-23. The much quoted concluding line of Zukofsky's abecedary of life and art is "z-sited path are but us" (563). The "z-sited path" not only alludes to the family initial, the last letter of the alphabet, but to son Paul's residence on Arbutus ("are but us") Path in Port Jefferson. The "z-sited path" is the terminus of the poem, which rightly ends with the family core of music and writing.

"A"-24

Most notable twentieth-century long poems were not finished. Pound originally planned on writing one hundred Cantos, after the pattern of Dante's comedy, but found that he could not "make it cohere" in the end, and so his poem trailed off into fragments. Williams originally conceived of a four-book structure for *Paterson*, but found the need to add another, inconclusive book, and Olson's deathbed fragments appended to the end of *Maximus* trail off. As Balachandra Rajan notes, the unfinished state is implicitly prized by many long poems. Such is the case for the archival poems of Pound, Williams, and Olson. An archive is not a structure that ends with narrative closure: the recording

activity may cease due to the dissolution of the archiving or archived entity, or the archive may simply become full. However, *"A"* not only reaches its foreseen end, but resolves itself in music. "A"-24, a polyphonic script set to a musical score, offers the last and one of the strongest calls to read Zukofsky in musical terms. However, even in this most musical setting, the work of archiving continues apace.

Zukofsky was committed to a twenty-four-book structure, but the question of how to end *"A"* must have perplexed him. His original concept, scribbled in his notes in the late twenties, was to return to themes long since dispensed with. An ending for a long poem is not easily achieved, as the examples of Pound, Williams, and Olson attest. But Bob Perelman sees Zukofsky's work to be conceived with its end forever in mind: *"A"* is the "teleological filling out of an organic structure" (174). The poem grows in accretions of "one and one and one," until it reaches its end. A "poem of a life" inevitably concerns itself with death. the deaths of "Ricky" (Chambers) in "A"-3, Zukofsky's father Pinchos in "A"-12, President Kennedy in "A"-14, and Williams in "A"-17 all figure prominently in the cited movements. However, an archive comes to a conclusion only with the death of its author, who obviously is in no position to document his own end.[68] Zukofsky chose an ending that not only documents the breadth of his life's work but literally sets it to music.

Celia Zukofsky compiled "*A"-24* without any idea that her husband would use it as the long poem's finale. She presented it to him with the title "L.Z. Masque" as a surprise gift in 1968. The fact that the arranger of "A"-24 is Celia rather than Louis is a bit problematic to the conventions of literary criticism. The words were all written by Louis over the course of his long career, yet Celia selected and arranged them. Given

[68] "Of Nought—light, leaf, grief— / lend grace wife and her / son keep to life's end /serein (horse) a full lawn." (560)

what we know about Louis Zukofsky's own poetic practice, we might rightly consider Celia, the collector and arranger of these documents, the author of "A"-24 (and at least one critic, Marnie Parsons, does). However, "A"-24 is yet another "found object" that Zukofsky incorporates. He chose this lengthy musical document to end *"A"* because its scope encompasses the breadth of his career, yet its provenance testifies to the deeply intimate nature of his poem.

The text is taken entirely from quotations from Zukofsky's previous works, set to Handel's *Pieces for the Harpsichord* in a sort of polyvocal arrangement. The trope of music is at its strongest in "A"-24 if for no other reason than it takes the form of a musical score. But the movement also emphasizes the arrangement of discrete documents. The score presents as many as four simultaneous voices, representing Thought (consisting of citations from his essays), Drama (his play *Arise, Arise*), Story (his short stories) and Poem (represented by *"A"*). Varying font size represents the relative volume of the four voices at a given time.

As a performance piece, *"A"*-24 utterly resists conventional reading practices. Nevertheless, it is the conclusion of a massive poem and therefore invites a textual reading. Readers must revise their interpretive strategies. Taking the example of the page reproduced above, the reader is driven away from the text to source material. The reader must be sensitive not only to the context of the passages, but also to the relative weight that each passage is given. Never more than in this musical setting is the work of reading *"A"* like working the archive: faced with a perplexing mass of documents, we must proceed carefully. We might research the previous uses of the documents, or relate them to other documents in the body of work. "A"-24 portrays its arrangement through the metaphor of the musical score, but by now we realize that the archivist selects and positions items as much as a musical composer.

As I draw near the end of this lengthy survey of *"A"*, I hope it is clear to the reader that archives and music not only co-exist in the poem, but complement one another. Zukofsky himself attests to this fact in a passage incorporated into *"A"-24*. The citation is from Zukofsky's essay on Pound, which I cited earlier in this chapter as evidence for Zukofsky's predilection toward parataxis. Here, Celia has chosen a passage that addresses the relationship between the archiving of objects and composition of music: "Try as a poet may for objectivity, for the past to relive itself…he can do only one of two things: get up a most brief catalog and breathe upon it, so that it lives as his music. The latter action need not falsify the catalog" (*Prepositions* 73, qtd in *"A"* 598-600). The Zukofskys' "brief catalog" of Louis's work certainly has the breath of music upon it, but the musicality does not "falsify the catalog" of archived documents. Music and archives are not mutually exclusive but in fact inform one another in *"A"*.

"A"-24 concludes with an index, a catalog of sources identifying what of Zukofsky's works and of Handel's music are incorporated into sections of the poem. In preparing the complete edition of the intricate musical archive that is the complete *"A"*, Zukofsky compiled another index, this of the entire long poem. According to Quartermain, his initial draft consisted of just three entries: "a," "an" and "the," but it was expanded at Celia's suggestion and with her contributions (208). The final form expanded considerably, to over a thousand items, and ranges from "a" to "Zion." It is appropriate that the Index to *"A"* was the last thing that Zukofsky ever completed. Like the final movement *"A"-24*, it similarly summarizes and concludes, yet repositions and enriches, the text as a whole. The Index is foreshadowed by this passage from *"A"*-14 :

> …No
>
> index was whole
> so our index
> will sometimes lead

us to us (337)

The index to *"A"* leads to many images and incidents in the long poem, and it can indeed be a powerful aid to the reader. It functions as a finding aid. One could find that Duns Scotus only appears once, in "A"-8, or could compare the nine listed references to Aristotle. The scholar can also discover previously unidentified sources encoded into the index. There are three references to "Kentucky" cited in the Index, and while the first two citations include geographical references to the state, the third page cited has no geographic references. Knowing that Zukofsky's only connection to the state was through his correspondent Guy Davenport, one can turn to this correspondence and find a letter that explains the local craftwork of chair makers cited in "A"-18. In this way, the Index leads not only into the textual archive of *"A"*, but into Zukofsky's literary archive as well.

The reader can use the Index to roam throughout *"A"*, exploring the concepts and images that are important to Zukofsky, from "astronaut" to "eye," from "horse" to "word." The Index, then, is suggestive of many arrangements of the material, of many paths by which to traverse *"A"*. The Index portrays *"A"* as a heterotopia: a vast field of incongruent parts resting together, no part subordinate to another. Foucault writes that we find these wildly varied spaces disturbing because "they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this *and* that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy 'syntax' in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also the less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and also opposite one another) to 'hold together'" (xvii). The Index portrays *"A"* as an archive full of the events of one man's life, but it nevertheless suggests that many arrangements, in the archival and musical sense, are implicit.

Chapter 5

The Hidden Foci of Production in "A"-9

When I began researching the Louis Zukofsky papers in the University of Texas collection, the Harry Ransom Center (HRC), the archive that houses them, was undergoing renovation. Patrons temporarily had to enter the Ransom Center through the back loading zone door, though naturally the "LZ" placard marking this door had another meaning for me. Reflecting on my continued work in the archive now, the coincident correspondence of the Loading Zone sign and Louis Zukofsky's initials suggests something further about the archive. The archive is a privileged site of reading, a fact all the more significant for an elusive writer like Zukofsky. The door labeled "LZ" was literally and figuratively my entrée into Zukofsky's work, and the archive has continued to influence my understanding of *"A"*. But the defining aspect of archives is that they preserve documents in a secure location; my research, obviously, has consisted of inspecting these documents, which include notes and drafts as well as page proofs and publications. My reading of *"A"*, and of "A"-9 in particular, cannot be separated from the versions I read in the HRC reading room—that is to say, my reading of Zukofsky cannot be separated from the *site* of my reading—the archive which I entered, for a time, through a secret back door.

Like many readers, I first came to know "A"-9 in the complete *"A"*, as published by the University of California Press in 1978. I subsequently read other printed editions, all owned by Zukofsky, as well as drafts and workings in Zukofsky's own hand. Although the linguistic content of the published versions does not vary (insofar as the movement had been completed—the first half was published well in advance of the completed poem), they each project a different understanding of Zukofsky's relation to

his ongoing work on the long poem. Zukofsky's presentations of "A"-9 characterize his changing methods in presenting archival material. In the earliest presentations, an entire range of textual objects are allowed to speak directly to the reader, from citations of Marx to transcribed laws of physics, to text of the first half of the poem, which itself describes objects speaking. The movement was later completed and published in versions that better reflect Zukofsky's later integration of all his "hushed sources" (*CSP* 99).[69]

In turning to analyses of specific, material texts in the Zukofsky archive, I am flouting the commonly accepted idea of text as such: that the text of a poem is an abstraction, freely reproducible in the medium of print. To invoke an old dichotomy, an archival reading calls on us to read not only the informational "content" of a document but to examine its material "form" as a potential source of evidence. (By "form" I do not mean, in this instance, the machinations of the sonnet or the canzone, but the physical manifestation of the text on the page and in the book—another way of describing the valuable documents secured in the archive.) Attending to the material texts parallels what some archivists have noted as a "fetishism of the record" in their profession (Taylor 130). This interest in material documents naturally arises from the requirement of preserving the document itself, and only secondarily the information the document contains. This materialistic concern dovetails with intriguing arguments in recent textual theory, seen in the work of Jerome McGann, George Bornstein, and others. McGann describes the dichotomy between linguistic codes, which literary critics generally interpret as the "content" of a piece, and materialist bibliographic codes, generally ignored by academic readers. McGann argues that literary critics should examine

> more than the formal and linguistic features of poems or other imaginative fictions. We must attend to textual materials which are not regularly studied by

[69] I am here quoting the poem "Anew 42": "I will give the world all my hushed sources / In this poem, (maybe the world wanted them)" (*CSP* 99).

> those interested in "poetry": to typefaces, bindings, book prices, page format, and all those textual phenomena usually regarded as (at best) peripheral to "poetry" or "the text as such." (*Textual Condition* 13)

Bornstein elaborates McGann's theory with Walter Benjamin's notion of "aura" to argue that the materiality of a text locates it in time and space and "carries part of its meaning [so] that the texts that we should read and study are composed not only of words but also of material elements of display" (Bornstein 63). In "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," Benjamin defines "aura" as a fugitive quality that marks a work of art's "presence in time and space, its unique existence where it happens to be " (220). Aura largely exists outside of economic exchange and prior to technological reproduction; it is inherent in a work of art that is "here and now" with a "unique existence in a particular place" (227). Since economic exchange and technological reproduction weaken a work of art's aura, it follows that aura is weak in the literature, since printing depends on technological reproduction and books are usually offered for sale. Benjamin puts aside the "enormous changes which printing, the mechanical reproduction of writing, has brought about in literature" as "a familiar story" and concentrates instead on the reproduction of visual art, especially on the new artistic problems represented by photography and motion pictures (218-219). Archival documents, though, certainly possess aura. They are prized for the evidence they convey about historical actions. In a literary archive, many documents have been produced by the author's hand. Therefore, the technological reproduction that led us to know the works in the first place is reversed. Finally, archival documents are preserved in a sphere largely removed from the world of commodities. They may show the traces of economic exchange and technological reproduction yet no longer fully partake in either system.

As an example of the aura of archival documents, consider the folder full of Christmas cards created by the Zukofskys and sent to Lorine Niedecker, included in the

Zukofsky archive (Box 25, Folder 1). The folder includes ten cards, each handmade from construction paper and each including a musical setting by Celia of a few lines of Louis's verse (or in one case a line from Shakespeare's *Pericles*.) Each of these cards is in effect an edition of one emanating from the Zukofsky workshop. The cards' aura is strong, since they reveal the artists' engagement with the materials, suggest personal relationships, and bear evidence of the time and place of their creation by virtue of being signed and dated. The authenticity of the cards—an important characteristic of aura, according to Benjamin (220)—is without doubt, as is the case for the majority of documents in any archive.

The aura of archival documents induces the reader of an archive to look carefully at a document's material state. The celebrated Canadian archivist Hugh Taylor notes an "intense effort by archivists… to redefine their role in an electronic multimedia environment [which] is giving rise to a close look at the physical and technological nature of the record as a means of communication" (113). (Note that Taylor here uses the broader term "record" rather than the more typically textual designation "document.") The advent of electronic media has laid bare the fact that meaning is not "limited to the content with the context of provenance or fonds, but must be sought also in the technology of the medium which has, since earliest times, had a profound effect on society as a whole" (Taylor 131). Zukofsky, attending throughout *"A"* to newspaper reports, notebook jottings, and television broadcasts, is persistently aware of the technologies of representation. The writing technologies on display in the Zukofsky archive range from the pen and pencil markings on slips of paper to an impressive variety of book formats. Zukofsky's publication history shows him pushing against the book form throughout his career, and even more so as years passed. As the previous chapter showed, *"A"* questions "book" as an applicable category for Zukofsky's work. *"A"*-12 in

particular, with its questioning of the book as a category and recreation of textual elements as primary documents (letters, graphs, a card from Paul), stages a critique of the very idea of the book. Almost every volume Zukofsky published possesses some curious bibliographical detail that likewise questions assumptions about the book: one of his volumes of lyrics, *Barely and Widely*, appeared as a facsimile of his handwriting, while another, *Some Time*, is printed only on the outside of uncut folio leaves. The bibliographic codes of his work provide what N. Katherine Hayles calls "material metaphors" for Zukofsky's intentions (22). A material metaphor is a media-specific relationship between the words of a text and its physical manifestation. Any book (or any website or any other particular medium) is a material metaphor for its content in that its manifestation structures the relationship of the reader to the words. Much of the time this relationship is unquestioned, especially if it falls within the reader's prior experiences of reading and familiarity with the medium in question, but certain texts work against established publishing norms to evoke powerful material metaphors. To illustrate this concept with Zukofsky's work, let me relate an anecdote recorded in British poet Charles Tomlinson's memoir of the Objectivist poets, *Some Americans*. Tomlinson writes of his outrage at finding an eight-year old copy of Zukofsky's *Some Time*, which he had borrowed from a library, uncut and apparently unread. While Tomlinson thought at first that the uncut leaves meant that the book could not have ever been read, he realized soon after starting to cut the pages open with a kitchen knife that the sealed signatures were in fact part of the book's design (145). While Tomlinson thought the uncut pages were further evidence of Zukofsky's unjust neglect, they in fact serve as a material metaphor for the very materiality of Zukofsky's language—the blank interiors of the gatherings suggest there is no symbolic meaning "inside" the poems, but rather, their entire effect is located on the linguistic surface. Various editions of *"A"*, published in installments over

fifty years, also include striking material metaphors or intriguing bibliographic signifiers. *"A"-24*, the prominent instance, was published as a musical score, making literal Zukofsky's claim to be " a writer of music" (*CSP* 61). The previous chapter notes how Zukofsky incorporates nonstandard textual glyphs and the photo-reproduction of William Carlos Williams's handwriting to liken the textual condition of his "book" to an archive of original documents. In this chapter, I will examine how various editions of "A"-9 employ bibliographic signifiers and material metaphors to express the incomplete status of the poem (both "A"-9 itself and then the larger *"A"*) and of Zukofsky's engagement with the materials of composition.

An archivally-sited reading gives us insight into one of the central questions of Zukofsky criticism: that of how the twenty-four movements of *"A"*, poetically and textually varied as they are, work together. Not only can one trace the evolution of most movements from notes to manuscript, Zukofsky's collecting and cataloguing provides easy access to different published versions of his works. For decades, Zukofsky carried a vision of *"A"* in his head and the schema of it in his wallet. Most of his life was spent wrestling with *"A"* in an incomplete form, creating its parts and putting them together. "A"-9 is an emblematic case for this continuing work. Zukofsky wrote the first half of this movement between 1938 and 1940, and published it in incomplete form as *The First Half of "A"-9* in 1940. The second half was not begun until 1948 and not finished until 1950, following a long break from *"A"*. It was not published until 1959 in the Origin Press edition of *"A" 1-12*, although neither it nor any part of *"A"* was widely available until the first American edition of *"A" 1-12* published in 1967.[70] The editions of *"A" 1-12* represent one half of Zukofsky's intended life's work. They both include as a

[70] It was preceded by the 1966 London edition by Jonathan Cape. I focus on the New York edition not only to consider Zukofsky's marginal role in U.S. literary culture, but to include paratexts by Robert Creeley and Zukofsky himself not included in the London edition.

foreword an explanatory poem that describes *"A"* as "a poem of a life/ —and a time." Zukofsky explains that the half-finished *"A"* "will continue/ thru 24 movements, its last words still/to be lived." He foregrounds the incompleteness of his project in this introductory poem, but it is worth noting that this is not the incompleteness of other archival poems such as Eliot in *The Waste Land*, a poem which is characterized as "fragments I have shored against my ruins" (20), nor of Pound, who essentially gives up his attempt at a unified vision in Canto 116: "I cannot make it cohere" (796). Rather, Zukofsky presents the first major edition of his life's work, *"A" 1-12*, as exactly half of its final form, implying the promise of symmetry and completion rather than chaos and dissolution.

As it happens, incompleteness or "halfness" is a primary material metaphor of the first separately printed part of *"A"*, his self-published mimeograph edition of *The First Half of "A"-9*. In fact, the notion of halfness shadows the major activity in Zukofsky criticism of finding the turning points in *"A"*. These have been catalogued in the previous chapter, but to briefly summarize: Barry Ahearn claims that "A"-10 marks a transition from the public to the private (209); Burton Hatlen says that "A"-12 pivots from the modern to the post-modern (214); and Peter Quartermain and others argue that the second half of "A"-9 exchanges Marxist materialist explanations of the world for Spinozan ethical relations. Quartermain finds that turning point not between movements but within the progress of "A"-9:

> [t]he major discontinuity in *"A"* occurs somewhere round the two halves of "A"-9…the poem accommodates to this shift through a formal strategy conspicuously absent elsewhere in the poem: the second half of "A"-9 matching the first; the form of "A"-11 inverting the close of "A"-8. The smoothness of form that marks "A"-9 as a whole covers a radical shift in Zukofsky's own thought: the break from Marx, hereon absent, and the entrance of family, hereon central, and, with this, a major and formal shift in language, from the propositional to the meditative. (60)

This discontinuity is figured not only in the shift of source material from Marx to Spinoza, but can also be detected in the physical formats of published versions of the poem, versions that Zukofsky either oversaw or otherwise advised on. The publication history of this particular movement demonstrates that halfness pursuing completion is a theme of the first half of Zukofsky's lifework. Moreover, the mechanisms of halfness at work in the evolution of *"A"* are signs of Zukofsky's unique poetics and peculiar conception of textuality. His early work, including the opening movements of *"A"*, was based on the models of high Modernism, including Eliot and Pound but also William Carlos Williams, using source material as propositional content. As Zukofsky's life and work progressed, source material became less apparent and more subtly worked in to the poem.

I will refer to Zukofsky's challenging of textual norms as his "textuality." This can be a slippery term, but here, I simply mean readers' and writers' notions or expectations of text as text. The ideological implications of text—including authority, linear order, and tradition—can be manifested in the physical state of books as well as implicit in their arguments. Jay David Bolter, a noted scholar of computers and writing, coined the term "writing space," which he defines as

> a material and visual field, whose properties are determined by a writing technology and the uses to which that technology is put by a culture of readers and writers. A writing space is generated by the interaction of material properties and cultural choices and practices. Moreover, each space depends for its meaning on previous spaces or on contemporary spaces against which it competes. Each fosters a particular understanding both of the act of writing and of the product, the written text, and this understanding expresses itself in writing styles, genres, and literary theories. (12)

In Bolter's analysis, the printed book represents a textuality of linear progression and unified voice, while the hypertext allows for multiplicity and associative relationships (27 ff). Zukofsky, as the above publishing anecdotes suggest, imagined and re-imagined

textuality throughout his career. The scrap of paper on which he sketched out his first plan for *"A"* shows a young man's idea for a completed modern epic, following the twenty-four-book structure of ancient Greek epic (Box 3, folder 14). Yet over his troubled publishing career, the books he produced consistently violated the norms of or pushed the limits of traditional conceptions of text, culminating with the score of *"A"-24* and the associative relationships implied by the Index to *"A"*. His unwillingness to produce "normal" books (and because of almost complete indifference from literary publishing he had an active role in planning all of his books) parallels his difficult and often eccentric poetics. Just as he challenges his (few) readers' preconceptions of how poetry signifies, he also pushes their notion of what a text is. A "poem of a life" is by nature flexible and contingent, and its textual state must be too.

I will now turn my attention to several versions of "A"-9, all of which belong to the Zukofsky collection at the HRC.[71] *"A"*-9 transforms its extensive citation of Marx (in its first half) and of Spinoza (in its second half) into densely wrought verse, borrowing its form from both the formula of a conic section and Cavalcanti's ""Donna Mi Prega." I will begin with the earliest, incomplete version, *The First Half of "A"-9,* and then look at three versions of the completed movement: its publication in two editions of *"A" 1-12* (the 1967 Paris Review edition and the earlier 1959 Origin Press version on which it is based) and its independent publication in Germany as a broadsheet. These versions all share identical linguistic content, but the bibliographical signifiers vary widely. I might also consider the fifteen drafts and proofs in the archive, which provide insight into Zukofsky's composing process. However, this labor is represented in *The First Half of*

[71] My reading of the various versions of "A"-9 is inspired by McGann's memorable characterization of the book as "a machine of knowledge" in his article "A Rationale for Hypertext." In the following reading of various editions of "A"-9, I am, in a matter of speaking, examining these versions of "A"-9 as machines of knowledge, and considering what kinds of "knowledge," or readings, the successive versions of the "A"-9 machine encourage.

"A"-9 by supplementary materials that incorporate the textual sources and mathematical formulae that Zukofsky employed in the composing process. Indeed, given the absence of the most relevant source of the first half of "A"-9, Zukofsky's edition of Marx, from the HRC archive (Zukofsky's copy has no doubt remained in the family's private possession) the extensive excerpting of source material in *The First Half of "A"-9* may actually provide better evidence of the composition process than the drafts and workings. My argument here is that reading the poem in various published versions not only changes our interpretation of this movement, but allows us insight into the writing space of *"A"*— that it is itself an archive of a life, accumulating over the course of the better part of the twentieth century. *"A"* is an archive open to unforeseeable future events, and the linguistic and material signs of halfness and incompletion mark this structure.

*The First Half of "A"-9 (*New York, 1940*)*

Without the context of publication history, one could not as clearly see the importance of the concept of incompleteness in *"A"*. That Zukofsky published work that was in some sense incomplete was inevitable, considering that he labored at the same massive poem for almost fifty years. In fact, he considered his entire corpus of a piece, a single work published in installments and various genres. But it is this very pretension to unity which makes the independent publication of *The First Half of "A"-9* so curious. Zukofsky uses the term "movement" in its musical sense to describe the sections of *"A"*, but of course a movement is a discrete, meaningful unit of a larger work. An orchestra might play a single movement of a symphony, but half a movement would be meaningless. Yet this is just what Zukofsky offers us in what his two bibliographers, Marcella Booth and Celia Zukofsky, both list as his first published book of poetry. Eight movements of *"A"* had already been completed, and all those had been published in little magazines or anthologies. Yet Zukofsky's literary star seemed to be steadily falling since

he edited the "Objectivist" issue of *Poetry* in 1931. Faced with growing lack of interest from the literary establishment, self-publication or silence may then have seemed the only viable options. But if self-publication, why not start at the beginning? Given the length of "A"-8, the scale of a collected *"A" 1-8* might be beyond the capabilities of the mimeograph machine used to produce "A"-9, but the earliest movements are short enough to publish the first six or seven. Conversely, "A"-8, at about sixty pages, also seems a likelier candidate for book publication than the two-page "A"-9. In addition to the eight movements of his long poem, Zukofsky had also completed most of *55 Poems,* a collection of lyric poems published by James A. Decker in 1941. For some reason, Zukofsky chose not to wait a year and debut as a lyric poet, but to rather submit to an uninterested world a section of a poem that was not finished. This choice suggests that he wished to present himself first as a poet in the process of a large ongoing project before presenting himself as a poet of the finely crafted lyrics of *55 Poems*. Considering all of these variables, it seems plausible that Zukofsky thought that *The First Half of "A"-9* somehow reflects or introduces the rest of his long poem. Indeed, *The First Half*'s incorporation of source material follows the technique used in "A"-1 and "A"-8; its elaborate form, which imitates a difficult renaissance genre, represents formal experiments such as the sonnet sequence of "A"-7; and most importantly, its confidence in textual objects to speak for themselves, seen here both in the sequence of source materials and as dramatized by the content of the poem itself, is an essential feature of all Zukofsky's work.

In a letter to Pound, Zukofsky explains his intentions in printing his "canzone," *The First Half of "A"-9*:

> I don't suppose anyone'll be anxious to print the canzone—& two years actual labor on it plus 7 years of thought (?) and study won't in any case, be rewarded with even nominal compensation. So, since Celia can and has offered to

> mimeograph it, I'll have run off 55 copies, about 30 for friends, and, maybe if someone'll handle 'em, the rest for sale at the prohibitive price of $5. (Ahearn, *Pound/Zukofsky* 203)

It is clear that Zukofsky desires publication to redeem or justify his nine years of intellectual labor, but he is also reticent to surrender it into the marketplace as a commodity. The option of an in-house production was an appealing option. It would allow him to portray his long work on the project by incorporating sources and methods, without translating it to a market value. The "prohibitive price" of five dollars was clearly outrageous for this pamphlet. After consulting a number of book catalogues from 1941, I have discovered that Zukofsky priced his pamphlet at double the price of a cloth-bound novel, and at more even than a leather-bound family Bible. Zukofsky's choice of a price that guarantees that no one would purchase his book is a curious gesture. Yet, despite the high price for a slim pamphlet, as a portion of nearly ten years of labor it is outrageously low. The price then, is perhaps a comment on the alienation of the intellectual laborer from his work. Nevertheless, it is doubtful that anyone ever paid for this edition, since it was given away freely. Among his correspondents, Cid Corman and Ed Dahlberg received copies years later for the asking, and no doubt continued searching in the recipient correspondence in the Zukofsky archive will reveal many more requests for and acknowledgement of the book.

Despite the obvious evidence of its mechanical reproduction by mimeograph machine, this copy of *The First Half of "A"-9* has a strong aura. Unlike a typical mechanical reproduction, which must "meet the beholder halfway" (Benjamin 220) between the creation of the art and the reader's individual situation in perceiving it, this work lays bare the conditions of the author's labor on it: the two years of writing and seven years of study. Not only does this edition present itself as half done, but it is "halfway" between unique manuscript and mass-produced publication. It also represents

Zukofsky's current engagement with his incomplete "poem of a life" in its staging of process and continuation, with the diffident marketplace in his valuation of his work, and with his beloved Celia in its presentation signature. This aura, as I have suggested, is a result of Zukofsky's straddling of publication and archive, and can only be detected when reading within the archive.

The first impression one gets of *The First Half of "A"-9* is that it is a completely homemade affair. The forty-one leaves are mimeographed from typescript, printed on recto only. They are bound in a manila folder, held together by two paper fasteners, on which the title, printed in red, stares boldly out at us. The title page tells us that the publication (New York, 1940) is "limited to 55 autograph copies, number 1 to 15 for presentation." The copy I examined is numbered 3 and inscribed to his wife (and, as mimeographer, the publisher) Celia.[72] Given the limited print run (Ahearn tells us that a print run of fifty-five copies was the minimum to establish copyright at the time(100)), we can guess that friends and associates received most of the first distributed copies. No doubt his friend and collaborator Jerry Reisman received a presentation copy, and his admired correspondents Pound and Williams probably did too. Because of its scarcity and esoteric qualities, the modest pamphlet could be interpreted as the calling card of an outsider, and by nature of its titular halfness, a sign of things to come.

The bibliographic details of Zukofsky's first book show his project as limited in circulation and mass appeal, yet vast in scope. It draws together diverse materials to form a specific context for reading the poem. Barrett Watten sees "A"-9 as part of Zukofsky's intention to "preserve as much as possible the confusion of many languages" in *"A"* (29). The table of contents indicates some of these jumbled languages. Glancing at it, we can

[72]The book can be found in box 14, folder 2 of the Zukofsky collection at the HRC. It can be argued that filing it among the drafts and manuscripts of "A"-9 is inappropriate because it, unlike a manuscript, bears the marking of public circulation. But because of its fragile condition, some special treatment is needed, and its provenance likewise mandates archival preservation.

see that the languages of the poem are not merely English (including Jerry Reisman's Brooklyn dialect and Zukofsky's Irish brogue translations of "Donna Mi Prega") and Italian, but the discourses of Marxism and physics. The title poem of this book accounts only for seventy-five lines over two pages of this forty-one-page pamphlet, yet incorporates many disparate sources and idioms. Supporting the two pages of poetry is an extensive apparatus: Zukofsky's intellectual inspiration, explanations of intention, and the implicitly necessary context for the readers. This edition suggests that new reading techniques are needed for this poem—that it needs to be read as a collection of documents that cast light on one another. It also portrays Zukofsky's process of composition by including the sources he was working from and revealing the procedures he was working with in the note on the "Form." (The ratio of n to r sounds follows the mathematical formula for determining the area of a conic section. Though this might sound unlikely, Zukofsky worked out the relationship in drafts preserved in his archive.) By venerating the production of the poem, Zukofsky restores some of the aura otherwise removed by standard publication.

The "Foreword" explains the inter-relation of the elements of Zukofsky's design. He verifies that the included source materials ("Guido Cavalcanti's *Donna Mi Prega*, its music and emotion of intellect; Marx's *Capital*, extracts from Chapters 1-13 and Value, Price and Profit; some concepts in modern physics; the translations; and the mathematical analogy to the form of the poem; as printed here") bear direct relation to the poem in that "all entered into the writing of the first 75 lines of 'A' – 9." He makes clear that the seven years of labor in reading these sources leads directly to the two years of writing, which is only the first half of the planned task. These sources are translated into "aids" for the reader and presented in this precise order, leading up to the poem "to have it fluoresce as it were in the light of seven centuries of interrelated thought… [so that] the

poem will explain itself. In any case, the aids may forestall exegesis. The Restatement at the end of the volume is intended merely as restatement." The elements of the book "fluoresce" in the end into pellucid meaning (one which might be used as a socialist weapon against capitalism, as Zukofsky claims in the Foreword). The model of textuality argued by *The First Half of "A"-9* is therefore linear. One source speaks after another through to the end, so that the writing process ends with a set linguistic value. Zukofsky indicates that his poem will be as clear as the prose restatement. The first half of "A"-9 is here presented as an equation. The "seven centuries of interrelated thought" leading up to the poem will "equal" the poem, which will equal the Restatement. No exegesis necessary.[73] The Foreword ends with a note on the "value" of his poem: "As for the ultimate value of the first half of "A" - 9 aside from what has already been said – a Briton pronounces capitalism with the accent on the second syllable: ca- pit'-al- ism. "A"-9 may mean more if it be taken also as a sign that capitalism will capitulate." Though the cover price is an outrageous five dollars, the "ultimate value" of the poem is even more shocking. The notion that this obscure pamphlet of poetry is somehow a forceful blow against capitalism is improbable at best. Yet, as a representation of Zukofsky's work, it is an object that ostensibly enters into the marketplace while retaining the aura of its originating labor.

Based on a simple page count alone, the dominant presence in *The First Half of "A"-9* is Marx, whose excerpted writing accounts for twenty-two of the forty-one pages. Many of the selections are from Marx espousing his theory of commodities, especially their use-value and exchange-value. Marx provides the lexicon and theoretical framework for the poem. Compare this paragraph from Marx: "If commodities could speak, they

[73] Except of course exegesis is invited by the density of the poetry, as work by Mark Scroggins, Susan Vanderborg, Quartermain, and others eloquently attests. Since the reproducible text of "A"-9 has received a fair amount of commentary (at least relative to other parts of "A") I will concentrate on the mode of analysis offered by the archive, the analysis of the document itself.

would say: "Our use-value may interest human beings; but it is not an attribute of ours, as things. What is our attribute, as things, is our value. Our own interrelations as commodities proves it. We are related to one another only as exchange-values" (qtd in *First Half* 6) with the following lines from the opening strophe of "A"-9:

> So that were the things words they could say: Light is
> Like night is like us when we meet our mentors
> Use hardly enters into their exchanges,
> Bought to be sold things, our value arranges;
> We flee people who made us as a right is
> Whose sight is quick to choose us as frequenters,
> But see our centers do not show the changes
> Of human labor our value estranges. (38)

This is not quite direct citation, but the semantic correspondence is clear. Zukofsky himself provides a prose restatement of this passage which in essence paraphrases the above passage from *Capital*: "The poem sings about things embodying a common denominator of past work, tho this abstract evaluation of them hides the fact that things are goods made to be used by people. If things could speak, they would point out that those who buy to sell them in the exchanges withdraw them from their proper owners who work in order to enjoy them."

This is hardly the stuff of the traditional lyric. It seems a world away from the love poem that provides "A"-9's formal template, "Donna Mi Prega." Yet the poem does more than simply translate Marxist economics into a lyric form. It also narrates the process of its composition. The opening lines, "An impulse to action sings of a semblance / Of things related as equated values" (38) implies the originating "impulse" nine years previous, that led to the study and writing which eventually became the thing we read now. The measure of "time congealed labor / In which abstraction things keep no resemblance / To goods created" describes the disparity between his labor and the commoditization of his book, a commoditization he has resisted in this edition. The

"things related as equated values" are the source materials collected in this edition, which cooperatively equate to the final meaning of the poem and the restatement. Zukofsky, as an artisan, is able to escape from alienated labor, or "value estrange[d]"; his "things" do "keep…resemblance / To goods created." A poem is a thing made by human labor, as the supporting evidence of this edition makes clear. It is unusual among things in that it can in fact speak for itself. But not only does the poem speak, but so do the bibliographic signifiers, which Zukofsky employs to argue against providing an exchange value for his labor.

While Marx might seem an unlikely literary avatar, at least compared to Guido Cavalcanti, Zukofsky's incorporation of Marxist ideas and vocabulary suggests that a snap judgment of Marx as somehow unliterary is based on ignorance. His inclusion of passages from Marx's writing makes this case even more emphatically. Not only can Zukofsky the poet adapt a Marxist vocabulary to a traditional literary form, but he presents short excerpts from Marx, five or more to a page, which show his lyricism and, through Marx's own quotation of Shakespeare, Aristotle, the Bible, and other sources, demonstrate Marx's continuity with literary tradition. Moreover, since the poem occurs on this bed of Marxist inspiration, Zukofsky's own work descends from the line traced by Marx. Benjamin argues that "the uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from its being imbedded in the fabric of tradition" (223). Marx's philosophy is revolutionary, yet Zukofsky reveals that it is indeed embedded in tradition. Like Zukofsky, Marx integrated time-honored sources into a radical project. By foregrounding his own sources, Zukofsky argues that his text, like Marx's, is the linear descendent of centuries of poetry, politics, and science. Following the succession of sources in these areas, Zukofsky's poem presents itself as a synthesis of thought that has occurred since the writing of its formal template, Cavalcanti's *"Donna Mi Prega*".

Curiously though, there seems to be surplus Marx, unused portions which do not contribute to the poem in style or content, inexplicably including lengthy condemnations of child labor (an issue addressed nowhere in Zukofsky's work). Several of these surplus passages might be read meta-discursively: One citation from Marx mentions that "there are various things which do not enter directly into the labour process… the earth... workshops, canals, roads. In the labour process…[t]he process disappears in the product" (qtd in *First Half* 13-14). By unveiling his sources and techniques, Zukofsky restores the process to prominence, implying that writing too is a form of labor, and so in his text

> The process whereby labour power is consumed is, at the same time, the process whereby commodities and surplus value are produced. The consumption of labour power, like of every commodity takes place outside the market, outside of the sphere of circulation. Let us leave this noisy region of the market where all that goes on is done in full view of every one's eyes where everything seems open and above board. We will follow the owner of men and the owner of labour power into the hidden foci of production, crossing the threshold of the portal above which is written: No admittance except on business. Here we shall discover not only how capital produces, but also how it is itself produced (Marx qtd in *First Half* 13).

The First Half of "A"-9 is another of these "hidden foci of production," an intellectual workshop where the alien discourses of Marx and Guido Cavalcanti (the latter a valuable property in Pound's literary economy) exchange with the equally alien language of contemporary physics. Only in a *sui generis* "location" like this pamphlet can the poet make his craft and intentions explicit. Even though certain features mimic the conventions of publishing, this edition literally and figuratively leaves the "noisy region of the market." The archive, away from the economic sphere, is the foci of production, not the marketplace. The incorporation of its materials reveal the intellectual labor that might otherwise go unnoticed. Though an informed reader may detect the renaissance Italian form (on which Zukofsky quotes Pound at length), no one would be likely to detect the graph of a conic section in the consonant pattern of the poem. Zukofsky

explains in the "Form" that "In addition [to the formal properties of the canzone], the first 70 lines are the poetic analog of a conic section – i.e. the ratio of the accelerations of two sounds (r, n) has been made equal to the ratio of the accelerations of the coordinates (x,y) of a particle moving in a circular path with uniform angular velocity" (*First Half* 37). This revelation of craft occurs "outside the sphere of circulation" in the sense that it takes place in a homemade edition pointedly outside the literary mainstream. Despite its "print run" of fifty-five copies, it is still as much the result of the Zukofskys' labor (Louis' s research and writing and Celia's mimeographing and collating) as the Christmas cards the couple sent to Niedecker.

Despite its unusual, handmade qualities, *The First Half of "A"-9* nonetheless evokes comparisons to at least two earlier volumes of poetry: T.S. Eliot's first book publication of *The Waste Land* and Ezra Pound's Italian edition of Cavalcanti. The inclusion of all the supplementary material recalls Boni and Liveright's 1922 edition of *The Waste Land*. Zukofsky admired Eliot, and included this specific edition of his poem as one of the "works absolutely necessary to students of poetry" (*Prepositions* 189).[74] Like "A" – 9, the text of *The Waste Land* was in itself too short to publish as a book, so the author created a scholarly (or mock-scholarly) apparatus. Eliot later called the notes "bogus scholarship," but Lawrence Rainey has provided evidence that they became part of Eliot's intended design (108). In Eliot's case, the notes have become part of the poem's canonical form; *The Waste Land* is seldom if ever reprinted without them. But Zukofsky, in completing and republishing "A" – 9, deleted his supplementary material. Unlike Eliot's act of self-interpretation, Zukofsky presents his sources in raw form, placed before the text they shape rather than delegated to explicatory and predetermined

[74] Zukofsky more directly invoked *The Wasteland* with his first major poem, "Poem Beginning 'The.'" He numbers every line (while Eliot numbered every ten), he puts his notes before rather than after the poem, and rather than five sections he writes six. The net effect is that in attempting to trump Eliot's poem, he parodies it.

roles as footnotes. Zukofsky's early statement on poetry, "Sincerity and Objectification," says that the goal of poetry is to record "historic and contemporary particulars" (189). His first book includes such particulars in the supplementary materials, though never again would these be so baldly revealed.

Perhaps a closer analogue, though less well known than *The Waste Land*, is Ezra Pound's edition *Guido Cavalcanti Rime,* published in Genoa, Italy in 1932. This volume combines Pound's scholarly edition of several Cavalcanti poems, including alternate readings and reproductions of the authoritative texts with fragments of the bilingual edition of "Donna Mi Prega" which he had previously attempted to publish in England. The contents of this abortive English edition might seem familiar to us in their similarity to *The First Half of "A"-9*: These similar elements include a foreword that explains Cavalcanti's radical potential (comparing thirteenth-century Florentine reaction to his thought to a "conversation about Tom Paine, Marx, Lenin, and Bucharin... in a Methodist bankers board meeting in Memphis, Tenn."); an English translation of the canzone (which became one of the translations that Zukofsky incorporated into *The First Half of "A"-9*) followed by the Italian original; and interpretive notes on the historical background, explanations of prosody, and a justification of translation decisions. Just as "Donna Mi Prega" provides a poetic template for "A"-9, Pound's edition seems to provide a bibliographic template. The most striking difference between the Pound and Zukofsky books is the comparative luxury of Pound's red leather slip-case edition, which bears the fascist imprint ANNO X (Year Ten) in gold on the cover. (This dating convention commemorated the beginning of Mussolini's reign; Pound also incorporated this dating style into his correspondence of the time, and it is reflected in various publications, including *Make It New*.) In some ways, Zukofsky was a reverse image of his first mentor: Jewish to the Anti-Semite, radical to the fascist, rooted to the wanderer.

As it happened, Zukofsky also created a mirror edition of Cavalcanti. Pound's failure to find an English publisher for his edition led him to rail in a letter to Zukofsky that "with plenty of printers, plenty of paper, plenty of ink, it is manifestly idiotic that we couldn't have the editions we want" (Ahearn, *Pound/Zukofsky* 33*)*. Zukofsky's alternative was to publish on a very small scale, in an edition that only a few desired and that flouts economic and bibliographic conventions. It was the edition that he, at least, wanted.

"A" 1-12 (Kyoto and New York)

The second half of "A"-9 was finished in 1950 but not published until 1959 by Cid Corman's Origin Press in Kyoto, Japan, as part of the sequence *"A" 1-12*. Corman's edition of *"A" 1-12* continued the work of building Zukofsky's small cult. Corman printed two hundred copies, part of which he personally distributed, mostly by mail, and part of which the Zukofskys stored in a closet, distributing on request. Zukofsky had suggested one hundred twenty-six copies, representing one hundred numbered copies to sell and twenty-six lettered A-Z for presentation, but Corman countered with five hundred. The pair compromised with two hundred. Zukofsky underwrote the publication with a check for $500, but he advised Corman that if he printed any more than two hundred, he would be "on his own." (See the Zukofsky-Corman correspondence in the Zukofsky archive, Box 18 File 1). Guy Davenport, an outspoken advocate of Zukofsky, recalls that one had to be in personal contact with Zukofsky or Corman to obtain a copy. (Davenport grimly concludes that it "cannot by demonstrated that the American public has ever clamored to read a long poem by an American poet" (101).)

In the completed form of "A"-9, published in this edition for the first time, there are no signs of the earlier apparatus, no conic sections nor Marx, nor is there any sign of rupture between the two halves. Rather, there is a smooth transition betweens parts, not even marked by extra white space. The canzone form begins again at the unmarked

beginning of the second half, repeating the structure and end words from the beginning of the poem. The second half mirrors the first, but its guiding spirit is Benedict Spinoza rather than Marx. The dense syntax obscures who is speaking at the end of the first strophe, but I read it as light itself, the medium that reveals the true nature of all things to the observer, and pointedly not "things" whose value is so readily corrupted :

> An eye to action sees love bear the semblance
> Of things, related is equated, —values
> The measure all use who conceive love, labor
> Men see, abstraction they feel, the resemblance
> (Part, self-created, integrated) all hues
> Show to natural use, like Benedict's neighbor
> Crying his hall's flown into the bird: Light is
> The night isolated by stars (poled mentors)
> Blossom eyelet enters pealing with such changes
> As sweet alyssum, that not-madness, (ranges
> In itself, there tho acting without right) is—
> Whose sight is rays, "I shall go; the frequenters
> That search our centers, love; Elysium exchanges
> No desires; its thought loves what hope estranges." (108-9)

With slight exceptions, the teleutons remain the same as the first stanza, but their meaning, or "value," changes in context.[75] The differences between the beginnings of the two halves of "A"-9 are notable: the "impulse to action," caught up in a system of exchange, is replaced by a meditative "eye to action." Value is now linked with love, not with the market. It is now "self-created" and completely harmonious with use within this loving, domestic "center." This new, finally completed, version of "A"-9 is now self-sufficient, depending on internal contrast rather than cited sources to establish meaning. The removal of the source material is necessary to allow new meanings to develop. "Exchange" is allowed to range more freely, and represents natural and spiritual uses rather than strictly economic ones. Source material still figures prominently, as the

[75] The end-words "changes" and "exchanges" trade places, while "ranges" varies from "arranges," but otherwise this strophe follows the same model as the first, written a decade before.

argument of the second half of the poem parallels passages from Spinoza's *Ethics.*[76] However, the sources now become "hushed," a practice he alludes to in his shorter poem *Anew* 42. As is the practice for the later movements of *"A"*, source material is woven more subtly into the texture of the poetry, as if to parallel the retreat from the political to the domestic.

The transition in *"A"* from the material and public to the spiritual and private occurs within a unified movement rather than between adjoining movements. The halfness of "A"-9 is erased by the fact of its completion and transferred, as it were, to "A"-12. I have already mentioned Zukofsky's intended twenty-four-movement structure; the twelfth movement is obviously the halfway point. Zukofsky foregrounds this in "A"-12, writing "I've finished 12 'books'/so to speak/Of 24" (258). The quotation marks around "books" signify his shifting conceptions of textuality. Zukofsky similarly always refers to "*A*" in quotation marks; *"A"* is a "book" only in a manner of speaking. His textual experiments within *The First Half of "A"-9* have been erased, abandoned like the several other hypothetical projects he enumerates in "A"-12. Notably, "A"-12 is approximately as long as the first eleven movements combined, so this marker of halfness is in turn half of the book it appears in. Arithmetically and textually, it is a sign of halfness pursuing completion. The bottom of the last page of "A"-12 resists closure with a simple "(continues)" (267). Its 'final' word is that there is more to come.

The completion of "A"-9 is obliquely narrated in the essay "Poetry. To My Son When He Can Read," printed at the back of the Kyoto edition. According to Celia Zukofsky's "Year By Year Bibliography of Louis Zukofsky," the forties represent the longest gap in the writing of *"A"* since it was first conceived in the late twenties. In the

[76] Twitchell-Waas notes that the latter half of "A"-9 has received less commentary than the first because the continuing Marxist-determined teleutons carry over from the first half. The second half "retains a fair amount of the Marxist terminology, although ventilated through Spinoza." Nevertheless, he does enumerate many uses of *Ethics* in the second half.

essay, composed in 1946, Zukofsky tells his infant son that he had recently taken some "almost illegible notes on poetry" out of his wallet (269). He explains that World War II had discouraged him, but his son's emerging language skills inspired him to follow up on these notes. While Zukofsky does not specify, it is possible that these notes refer to the card on which he had sketched out the plan of *"A"* in 1928. The second half of "A"-9 then takes on additional significance as the resumption of a life's work. The renewed writing of *"A"* takes its inspiration from "love," not "things," and so the larger motion of "*A*" is enacted in the composition history of "A"-9.

The more informed reading of "A"-9 made possible in this book form comes not only from the new Spinozan context, domestic focus, and the fact of its completion, but also from its relationship to the other movements. If the foci of production are now concealed, the loci of meaning change to various places of textual adjacency in *"A"*. Zukofsky's reader has access to not only the double canzone of the ninth movement, but can compare the movement to, for instance, the formally similar sonnet cycle of the seventh movement. The similarly rigorous structure emphasizes the similarity of content. "A"-7 is set on the stoop of a brownstone, and is apparently about economic depression. The language of the beginning of "A"-9 abstractly suggests a political context, but the physical setting of "A"-7 gives it a place in history. "A"-8 introduces a more theoretical element, "labor as creator/labor as creature" (43), more blatantly arguing for the identification of writing and labor we discovered in the selected quotations from Marx. The absence of Marx's writings in "A"-9 is compensated for by some half-dozen quotations of *Capital* in "A"-8. These short passages are meager compared to the twenty-two pages of Marx in *The First Half of "A"-9*, but they at least prepare the reader for the theory and vocabulary to come in the following movement.

Following the completed "A"-9, Zukofsky explains the invisible temporal gap in its composition in "A"-10: "The poet stopped singing to talk" during the war years (120). Zukofsky seems here to be narrating the same break he discusses in the essay on "Poetry." The short "A"-11 symbolically reduces his audience to three: his wife, his son, and himself. It is a hermetic movement, but not difficult in the sense of "A"-9's compact syntax and obscure poetics. Rather, as Hugh Kenner says, "If we do not fully comprehend it is not that our understandings are unfit, it is merely that we are not of the family, and we are overhearing family conversation" (202). By now we are a world away from poetry as a "sign that capitalism will capitulate" (*First Half* 7). We are rather closing in on a poetry distrustful of public signification. "A"-12 proposes four tutelary spirits: Bach, Paracelsus, Spinoza, and Celia. Marx is notably absent. The poet has stopped talking of social ills to sing of aesthetic, intellectual, and domestic pleasures.

Unfortunately, the Kyoto *"A" 1-12* is a defective text. I examined Zukofsky's personal copy of this edition. It includes a tipped-in errata sheet listing twenty-one misprints, to which Zukofsky added two more errors at the bottom. Most of these are simple typographical errors and misspellings easily correctable by an alert reader, but some of the errors can lead to significant misreadings. For instance, at a particularly lyrical moment in "A"-12, Zukofsky writes "And I will sing." Unfortunately, readers of this early edition read "I will sink." The number of errors in this edition is understandable, as much of Zukofsky's poetry refuses traditional "sense." The fact that type was set by Japanese workers with limited knowledge of English did not help prevent these errors from creeping into the text. The case is similar to the error-ridden first edition of *Ulysses*, also a difficult work printed in a foreign country. Both these cases are examples of the means of production affecting the meaning of text. It seems that not only can mechanical reproduction rob a work of more than a vague aura, but it can also

corrupt the text itself. Fortunately for the present study, all printings of the poem "A"-9 contain identical text. As the first collection of *"A",* the Origin Press edition is a sign of Zukofsky claiming his place in the literary world, but the limited distribution and defective copy suggest that this work, like the rest of the long poem, is still to be completed.

The Paris Review edition of 1967 is a corrected reprinting of the Origin edition.[77] It lacks the essay by Zukofsky and the appreciation by William Carlos Williams but adds an introductory "Note" by Robert Creeley. Creeley represents Zukofsky's new promotional network of poets associated with Black Mountain College and Don Allen's *New American Poets* anthology. The replacing of Williams with Creeley signals a shift in Zukofsky's status from an overlooked younger contemporary of the Modernist masters to an elder statesman of and inspiration to a new generation. This first widely available edition of Zukofsky's masterpiece shows what a long struggle it had been. Twenty previous publications by the author are listed, beginning with the edited collection *The "Objectivists" Anthology* of 1932, including *The First Half of "A"-9* in 1940, and stretching up to the recent publication of his collected essays in *Prepositions* and short poems in two volumes called *All*. (Note the nod to completion in that title—"all" the short poems. *"A"* at this point has only attained the first volume.) A sizeable portion of his "poem of a life" finally takes its place in the order of his other works, an order that began with the publication of *The First Half of "A"-9*. Creeley's preface lauds Zukofsky's achievement and accurately characterizes it: "We may speak of *the* as some

[77] *"A" 1-12* was the third book, and first volume of poetry, published by Paris Review Editions, following Harry Mathews's *Tlooth* and James Salter's *A Sport and a Pastime*, two novels published in 1966. The series was published in cooperation by the influential literary magazine and Doubleday. Each of the first three publications was promoted by a full page advertisement in the magazine, describing the work in question as a cut above the ordinary: "By creating a distinct world of its own, it ["A"] is a book written and published for those who are interested in seeing literature grow." This advertisement, appearing in the Spring 1968 issue, represents the most publicity Zukofsky received from the Paris Review. Unlike Salter and Mathews, his work did not appear in the journal's pages in the years following this publication.

thing previously noted or recognized, and of *a* as that which has not been thus experienced" (ix). *"A"* transforms the orderly and categorical into a provisional and changing experience of life.

"A"-9 (Stuttgart, 1966)

The final version of "A" that I will examine is one of the most ephemeral publications in the Zukofsky canon, one that has not been commented on in Zukofsky criticism as yet. The completed "A"-9 was published as a discrete entity once, in 1966, by Editions Hansjorg Mayer in Stuttgart, Germany. It was issued as the fifth of the Futura series, which included broadsides by other, younger avant-garde poets of the time, including the Americans Dick Higgins and Jonathan Williams. This edition of "A"-9 is a poster-sized broadside, folded in eight. But this gathering is not to be cut through to form pages, but to be unfolded to display a grand design. In their disquisition on rhizomes in 1000 Plateaus, Deleuze and Guattari stipulate that "the ideal for a book would be to lay everything out on a plane of exteriority of this kind, on a single plane, the same sheet" (9). This ideal is literally achieved by this edition. The layout allows the reader to see three canzones at once—Cavalcanti's followed by the two halves of Zukofsky's poem. Halfness is visually displayed—the left half of the broadside is comprised of the title page, a German translation of the "Form" and Cavalcanti's template in the original Italian. The right half of the broadsheet consists entirely of Zukofsky's work. This division into halves displays a left-to-right progression from materials to final product. The layout allows the reader to see the two halves of the double canzone side-by-side. Scanning across rather than reading down, one can see the pattern and recognize change.

This text escapes the linearity that books rely on, and that The First Half of "A"-9 foregrounded. The reader of the broadsheet cannot expect the text to "fluoresce" after reading from the beginning to the end. Rather the reader must acknowledge the physical

sign that any element of what is now a field of play rather than the rigid discipline of the printed page can intrude on any other element. This edition restores the explanation of the form, but relies, not unreasonably, on the reader's knowledge to fill in the background about Marx. The first half of "A"-9 is now wedged in between Cavalcanti's model and the second half. Instead of being the culmination of an intellectual line of descent, it is the middle stage of a poetic procession, from Cavalcanti's song of love to Marx's material concerns to Zukofsky's familial love.

Zukofsky, not alone among difficult poets, claims that his poetry speaks for itself. In the foreword of the Paris Review edition, he writes, "After 40 years of the writing and still/ with it, it is easier to say here it is/ than explain what seems to me to be clear." Yet what is unclear about a text is its own history that it swallows up and covers over in subsequent printings. "A"-9 clearly employs Marxist and Spinozan vocabularies, yet it is not only about economics and love. Much of its meaning comes from its struggles with its own incarnation, with its articulation. Could Editions Hansjorg Mayer be the best version of "A"-9 to read? The version that balances half and whole, process and completion? The version that most fully rejects the boundaries of the book? It does represent Zukofsky's last intentions, since it follows the Corman publication of "A" 1-12, even though it precedes the Paris Review publication based on that text.

The practical considerations of publishing make it unlikely that this broadside version will be republished and widely distributed. But some approximation of the broadside might be used as an interface for, or sort of entryway into,"A"-9. A digital edition of "A"-9 could use the broadsheet as a gateway to further documents. A user of this edition could focus on Zukofsky's poem, viewing it in the various typefaces used, or could investigate the history of Cavalcanti's poem by reading the various translations. The apparatus of The First Half of "A"-9 could also be made available, not to mention

deeper readings into Zukofsky's primary sources. In other words, the broadsheet could provide a portal into a section of the Zukofsky archive at the HRC, and at least partially borrow the privilege that the reader in the archive enjoys. Of course, such a digital interface is purely hypothetical, since, unlike the successful Rossetti and Blake web archives, the Zukofsky archive is still subject to copyright and under the control of a private individual. However, Paul Zukofsky has shown some interest in posting certain archival material—namely, his father's marginalia—online, so such an edition might one day be possible.

The critic of Zukofsky must eventually address the question "why read "A"?" It is long, obscure, allusive, elusive, and at times incomprehensible. "A"-9, with its complexity, hidden sources, tangled syntax, and constrained vocabulary, is a particular focus for such a question. Eric Mottram's judgment that the first half of "A"-9 is "strained versifying which operates as a trite statement of art taking the place of labour" and as "virtuosic rhetoric which, although it refuses the cruder excesses of 'proletarian poetry,' verges on… extravagant games" (98-99) may very well be just. But Zukofsky's difficult and often frustrating work rewards sustained attention. Implicit in it is an argument about textuality that becomes increasingly important. Our long held preconceptions about text are challenged by "A", by this "book" only in a manner of speaking, so it is natural if our initial reaction is confusion or even hostility. Just as "A" supplements, confronts, and undercuts standard uses of language, it challenges the traditional tropes of textuality, including authority, linearity, and intertextual relationships. Rather, it offers an archival textuality of reader participation, contingent value, and multiple relationships. Our wide view of "A"-9, made possible by reading multiple versions in the Zukofsky archive, shows that reading a text for textuality is like reading for gender or political ideology. These considerations tend to seal themselves up

in the texts they inhabit, and are only found through purposeful readings. In the evolution of this single movement of "A", textuality itself is being contested. In the first half of "A", Zukofsky had still not resolved the issue. Most of the early movements of "A" pursue Pound's model of citation and juxtaposition of controlled sources, but in the end Zukofsky discovered a model which at once recognized contingency but still could attain completion. In this regard, "A" is very much an archive: a receptive structure to be filled with the documents of an individual's life and work.

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